

INVITING CONFUCIUS TO CHURCH-
AWARENESS OF THE MISSIONAL STRATEGIES
IN THE POSTMODERN EFC

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ABSTRACT

In amidst of the impeding challenges the EFC (Evangelical Formosan Churches) is facing, the increasing demand of an constructive, inter-religious dialogues to the tsunami of Confucian cultures ashore, author argues, that the EFC not only does not succumb to these challenges, but instead, is offered an unprecedented opportunity, after forty years of its pioneer church founded in downtown Los Angeles, to reshape and to thrive in America, especially within the Confucian Chinese immigrants community in the U. S. A.

Through the change of evangelical ethos and attitude, EFC C has a time-pressing opportunity to present the gospel to an audience who believes a system of social cohesiveness dependent upon personal virtue and self-control. For Confucius and to the Confucian Chinese, society's harmony relied upon the appropriate behavior (*Li*) of each individual within the social hierarchy; and its emphasis on practical ethics has led a society governance by secular philosophy without the need of religion.

1 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Great Commission has been given to all the faithful by our Lord: by baptism and teaching to proclaim the Good News to all peoples, to make disciples, and to bear witness. We are called to proclaim the Gospel, no matter what means we choose to employ in order to execute the last command of our Lord. We are the communicators of the Good News of Christ. But in speaking of the communication of the Gospel we are challenged with this question: How do we present the Gospel? As the communicator of the Gospel does not exist in vacuum so as the receiver. Therefore, in spite of past failure, we are called and are challenged to communicate the Gospel effectively through the consideration of the contextualization of Gospel. One of the primary concerns in this study is to find out the possible venue which will help communicate the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese. The teachings of Confucian thought will be explored in order to shed light on the understanding of this ethnic group of people.

The United States has been an immigrant-receiving nation; many religions have been established as immigrant religions by different immigrant ethnic groups during and after their settlement. EFCLA (Evangelical Formosan Church Los Angeles) is one of the immigrant churches established by the Taiwanese Americans forty years ago. Despite its constant struggles of accommodation in the new land in the past, EFCLA, not only has grown to a larger church but also been actively assumed the leading role in the development of the EFC gospel movement. Now forty years later, the EFC gospel movement has evolved and became the EFC General Assembly, which consists of one

hundred churches around the globe and includes another four Christian institutions under its leadership.

In the early stage of church development, EFCLA was established to satisfy the need of ethnic identity and to preserve homeland cultures. EFCLA was a community center and an important symbol of ethnic identity in the Los Angeles area for Taiwanese immigrants. EFCLA has also gone through a process of constant adjustments to the American environment as well as the demographic changes within and outside of church in the later development stage. EFCLA is an immigrant church from Asia after the reformulation of immigration law in 1965. During the later years of EFC history, its members' background displayed different religious and social backgrounds, such as non-Christian and middle class backgrounds, which have been more diverse than the early European immigrant religions. EFCLA has proved its versatility in adopting church policy and directing church resources to face these challenges. To certain degree, EFCLA is a successful and healthy Taiwanese church model. However, it is not the EFCLA, but the EFC Nasa and the other not-so-large EFC churches in North America are this thesis-project's concern. If the church membership is the necessary indicator as a successful church, the majority of the EFC churches cannot be categorized under it. In North America, there are only 16 out of 33 EFC churches have membership more than 100. Therefore, the second concern of this thesis is to investigate the possible directions that the small EFC church in the North America like EFC Nasa can take in order to be an effective communicator of the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese.

Central Problem

According to Chao's paper, studies in the sociology of religions have indicated that contextual and institutional factors are the two major factors explanations for studying church growth and decline as well as religious movements. Contextual factor are defined as societal influences which the church has little or no control over, such as secularization and modernization, culture and value changes, demographic changes etc. However, an oppositional conclusion is offered by other researchers who study factors fostering the growth in conservative and sectarian churches. These researches claim that institutional factors (such as evangelism strategy, demanding policy, pastoral and lay leadership, and theological perspective and ideology) are the primary influences on church growth.

Wagner (1979) recognizes that there is no simple reason that a given church or denomination grows or declines, but he indicates that appropriate decisions and actions taken by the church can lead to growth. At the local church, pastoral leadership, ideology (such as the homogeneous Unit Principle), efficient utilization of an evangelistic method, and a high priority for fostering church growth are influential.¹

As we also learned from Sociology of Religion, many immigrant church's studies have never carefully considered the increasing flow of immigrants from third world countries, especially from Asia after the reformulation of immigration law in 1965. Kivisto indicates that a study of these immigrants and their religions can challenge some assumptions about American religious development that have been based on early European immigrants and their religions (Kivisto, 1993:94). It is thus special important that Chao's study takes the consideration of the flaw of these assumptions and designs a

¹ Hsing-Kuang Chao, "Mobilizing to Grow: The Persistence and Transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles" (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1995), 4-5.

synthesis study approach, which examines religious development from an organization perspective (Bromley and Shupe, 1979) and reflects the ongoing dialectic between the environment and the religious organization is needed. As noted earlier, studies in church growth and decline, religious movements, and immigrant religions have relied on contextual and institutional factors to examine the development of religious organizations. Even though, the researchers have noted that, the social environment can provide societal resources to religious organizations, the effects of the social environment are felt in different ways by different religious organizations; they respond to the social environment according to their structure and dynamics. Therefore, the influence of contextual or environmental factors can never be ascertained with accuracy.² Moreover, according to Chao, various studies on some successful religious organization indicated that the willingness and ability of religious organizations to accommodate to their surrounding environments are other elements crucial to the future of religious organizations.

Chao's study indicated that EFCLA was willing to accommodate to its surrounding environment, but how about the EFC Nasa, where the author of this thesis has pastored in the last six and half years? If EFC Nasa is one of the typical small EFC churches in North America, other than the contextual and institutional factors, what else can EFC churches continue to do in order to maintain health grow in the North America? What possibilities that the EFC churches in North America can offer to Christ, says, in the coming decade?

Research Questions

The majority of the EFC churches members are from Taiwan. From the cultural points of views, Taiwanese culture is part of the greater Chinese culture. And many

² Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 10.

Taiwanese and Chinese resembles in many ways, culturally and characteristically. They are part of culture shaped by, in general, Confucius teachings. Like many Chinese, Taiwanese are proud of their long history of glamour. Taiwanese people are peaceful, hardworking and easily contented. They respect elders, love children and are patient with their fellows. And like Chinese, Taiwanese in general are reserve and humble. They believe in harmony and avoid confrontation. Inherited traditions generations after generations, Taiwanese believed and abide by the living of Confucius ways, consciously and subconsciously. Taiwanese are very proud of their civilized society. Foreigners are welcome and being treated more fairly.

Like Chinese, Taiwanese are open and pragmatic toward differences in religions and culture. They respond little difference to the Christianity. But general speaking, from the author's observation on the Taiwanese people, there were at least two factors hindered them from building a relationship with the personal God the Christianity claims. The first one is the ignorance of the existing of the "singular" God; the second is the cultural bias or cultural egotism. The former tend to blind them from seeing clearly of their sinful nature and behaviors, the latter gives them an excuse to remain the way they wanted, wandering on different philosophy and religious teachings. These views will be discussed further in the thesis.

How to invite the Taiwanese as well as the Chinese to the EFC churches in North America in a culturally sensitive and contemporarily relevant manner? The author of this thesis suspects that the findings from Chao's study on the EFCLA and the success of the EFC Nasa's outreach program may help answer the question. If the concern is how to

invite the Taiwanese and the Chinese who live in North America to EFC church, what contextual theology can we employ from our past experience when the opportunity come?

Sociological of religion showed us a clear view of the factors which promote or deter the propagation of immigrant religion. How can we make use of them? What challenges and opportunities lie ahead for the EFC? What does EFC need to know about Confucianism? What are EFC's obstacles to preach the gospel to Chinese in North America? How can EFC be a better stewardship in fulfilling the Great Commission? How to invite non-Christian Chinese to church?

Purpose of the Study

The thesis attempted to employ interdisciplinary studies, which emphasizes on different approaches, such as, thematic approach, sociological approach, theological approach, and theoretical approach to study, in this thesis, how to invite Confucius to church in the postmodern EFC. The purpose of this study is to help define who EFC is; what is EFC's calling to, and how EFC can be a better stewardship in fulfilling the Great Commission that Jesus had challenged his disciples?

Definition of Key-terms

Culture- Many definitions of culture have been attempted in the past. Crouch say, *Culture is what we make of the world.* “Culture is, first of all, the name for our relentless, restless human effort to take the world as it is given to us and make something else. This is the original insight of the writer of Genesis when he says that human beings were made in God’s image: just like the original Creator, we are creators. God, of course, begin with nothing, whereas we begin with something.”³ Sociologist Peter Berger, Says, “Every

³ Andy Crouch, *Culture Making* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 23.

human society is an enterprise of world-making.” And Dr. Wan⁴ catches the meaning in a profound Christian way, “Culture is the interactions between Being and beings.” Thus culture is not to be understood merely as the human activities, but perceived as the interactions between the creator and the created- human and the universe.

Confucianism and Confucius Culture- As Dr. De Bary put it this way, the “good and bad points of Confucianism” tend to go together,⁵ what we learn from this report will serve as a help guide in dialoguing with those who are influenced under Confucianism, especially Chinese immigrants. Confucianism or Confucius teachings is, a lengthy tradition evolved through history, dynasty after dynasty, recorded and developed by the students of Confucius generation after generation and later became a set of canon with comments written by the scholars, slowly evolved through history.

Confucianism, similar to the priest anarchy developed in the western church, has a set of heaven and ancestor worship rituals, excludes the priest system, nor monastery. It can be called “secular religion”, since it has the form of religion, such as believer’s conviction but lack of religion content. Some scholars coined with Max Weber, believed that Confucianism has a distinctive religion component in it.⁶

⁴ Dr. Enoch Wan is an anthropologist. He was born in China and educated in the USA. He is currently Professor of Anthropology & Director of Doctor of Missiology Program at Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon, USA. Dr. Wan also serves as the current President of the Evangelical Missions Society (EMS). Dr. Wan previously served as Missions Department Chairman at the Hong Kong Alliance Bible Seminary, Founding Director of Intercultural Studies Program at Canadian Theological Seminary, and Founding Director of the Ph.D. Intercultural Studies Program at Reformed Theological Seminary. He had also planted and pastored churches in Hong Kong, New York, Vancouver, and Toronto; and engaged in missionary services in the Philippines, Venezuela and Australia. He is the Editor of the electronic journal: www.GlobalMissiology.org

⁵ William Theodore De Bary, *the Trouble with Confucianism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), xii.

⁶ Julia Chin. *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977), 2.

The “Jen” teachings of Confucianism bundle up the doctrines and the morality requirements. “Jen” is the virtue of humanity, is the display of five normal relationships. And later during the Sung and the Ming dynasties, the thoughts of metaphysics and cosmology imputed in “Jen”. Even though Confucianism, on the one hand, emphasizes the undeveloped potentiality and goodness of humanity, on the other hand, at the same time, emphasizes the joyfulness of human enjoy the harmony, immersive relationships with the nature.

“Confucius teachings disregard the good works accumulated in this life in order to earn the self-redemption for the next life. It takes a possible realized eschatological view: emphasizes the earthly life here and now, not the future life, since the future has its own turn.”⁷ Thus, and it is safe to say, the secular humanity Confucianism cares for the civil, social order which is based on the goodness of human nature emphasizes an invisible order. This order, in Neo-Confucianism, is called the order of heaven; it is inner and transcendent.⁸ The source of the transcendence is not caused by the pardon of sins by God’s grace, transforming sinner to his original state. Instead, it signifies the possibility for a human being to become a saint and a wise man through self-cultivation and self-transcendent. Confucianism teaches people through moral emphases in order to realize the result of self-transcendent, self-cultivation.

Even though Confucianism talks about love, in it love is expressed in more of a mutual, reciprocal, and rational humanity sense, than a religious, altruistic, and sacrificing conviction. When compared with other religions, Confucianism is a rational knowledge of humanism, and its love principle is motivated by self-cultivated works,

⁷ Chin, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study*, 22.

⁸ Chin, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study*, 22-23.

which are propelled from the inner self-conscious search and extended to the outer moral display of optimistic worldview, believing that through proper teachings and hard works, every individual can recover his original goodness and pure consciousness.

Contextualization and Sino-theology- Contextualization is used to denote “the efforts of formulating, presenting, and practicing the Christian faith in such a way that is relevant to the cultural context of the target group in terms of conceptualization, expression, and application; yet maintaining theological coherence, biblical integrity and theoretical consistency.” There is no distinction between “contextualization” and “indigenization” – they are used interchangeably.

“Sino-theology”: a unique theological orientation specially designed for the Chinese people in contra-distinction from TWT: employing the Chinese cognition pattern (e.g. “both-and” vs. “either-or” of TWT and Chinese cognitive process (e.g. synthetic vs. the dialectic of TWT), the Chinese way of social interaction (e.g. relational/complementary vs. dyadic/mostly confrontational of TWT), Chinese vocabulary (e.g. “tien” (天) = heaven), Chinese cultural themes (e.g. group solidarity such as family vs. self-fulfillment of TWT.), etc. The goal of the contextualization is not to transplant Christianity in the “pot” of Western culture but to plant it in Chinese cultural soil so it can take root, flourish and grow.⁹ The Sino-theology is a theology which governs and warrants the communication of the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese without falling into the traps of paternalism, triumphalism, racism, and syncretism, etc.

⁹ Enoch Wan, “Christianity in the East and the West,” *Chinese around the World* (CATW) Article III p. xxx. For other details regarding the complexity of the issues and debates to ST and TWT, as Dr. suggested, readers may consult two separate titles by Dr. Wan, Eno: “Sino-theology: A Survey Study. Toronto, Canada: Chinese Christian Communication Inc. of Canada. (in full Chinese script), 1998. And Yeung, Arnold: Introduction to Christian Cosmology Taipei, Taiwan: Campus Evangelical Fellowship. (in Chinese), 1986.

Assumptions

In this study, various terms, “Confucianism,” “Confucian,” “Ru-Chia, 儒家” and the teaching of Confucius are used interchangeably. “Whose Confucianism are we talking about?”¹⁰ In this thesis, Confucianism will be treated as a cultural phenomenon which derived from the original teachings of Confucius in the *Analects* rather than elaborating the meanings of the quotations from the original texts. The definition of Confucianism will not be frozen to any certain period of time and space during its course in history, the cultural traits of Confucianism evolved from the *Analects* will be our main concerns. Thus, the title of this thesis “inviting Confucius to church” can be understood as “inviting Confucian Chinese to know Christ.”

Limitations

For more than 2500 years Confucius has dominated and modeled the thinking and the civilization of China. Although it was criticized and mocked in modern China during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), many of its teachings have consciously or unconsciously effected and shaped the Chinese all over the places. Even in today, Confucianism is still a dominant ideology, a way of life, a system of thought, permeating every aspect of political, social, and family life of Chinese.

Many cultures of North-East and South-East Asia were influenced and shaped by the Confucius teachings, yet how little did the people who live under them ever realize that. To certain degree, it is true even to the Taiwanese and the Chinese who come from that culture and now live in North America. The culture and characteristics displayed due to the influences of Confucianism and of postmodern are our main concern in this thesis.

¹⁰ William Theodore de Bary, *the Trouble with Confucianism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. xi. The question asked by William Theodore de Bary in the preface of his famous book.

The influence of culture on people is much greater than they think. For a new converted Christian, he subconsciously brought the moral teachings of Confucius “what-it-should-be-done” to church. It is like a person who lives in the western culture, and he is so used to the individualistic way of living without knowing that he is exercising it freely every day. And there are many similar teachings of Confucianism, which blend well with Christianity; both eulogize the high moral characters and ethical standard, the dedication to hard-working, and the respect to elders. Certainly, we need to recognize the facts that there are good teachings of Confucianism, yet, as Christians we also need to be extremely careful as we may fall to synergism as our early church Brothers who adopted Aristotelian thought into Christianity, and latter the thought co-existed with Christianity and finally the mixture of Christianity and Aristotelism emerged into Scholasticism.

There is an interesting coincidence that Christianity seemed to attract Chinese scholars as well at its early day. In the early 1800’s when the missionary introduced the Christianity to China, the Chinese scholars resisted against Christianity on behalf of Confucianism, as if the early church Fathers protested Christianity against Aristotle’s teachings. But as we Christians are called to understand all cultures, western individualisms, modernism, and postmodernism- including those influenced by Confucianism- all the other “-isms” need to be critiqued by the gospel.

With these in mind, this thesis-project was therefore, aimed at, within the EFC and without, those people who share similar cultural background and whose worldviews might have been shaped under moral and ethical dogma, and/or Confucius-like teachings, that emphasized the thinking of personal convictions, like self-cultivation, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency. The author of this thesis-project hope that the findings of this thesis

may benefit to a larger Chinese community, to correct the overemphasis of Christian legalism in many Christianity communities as well as to those who had converted to Christianity, but subconsciously exercise the moral ways of living daily over the teachings of the grace of Jesus Christ.

Significance of the Study

According to the postmodern way of thinking, there is no absolute truth. And since the Reformation period, the traditional monopoly of Christianity, and its derivative cultures have been challenged from every directions. The following three descriptions partially explain the immediate challenges that the Christianity has been facing, in which the clash of civilization, deals with the new world order; in the constructive dialogue, deals with the battle fronts of the cultural conflict; and in the Asian tsunami, deals with the arising of the Asian values.

Clash of Civilization- Many large scales of conflicts frequently sparked in the last several decades in the world have validated the prophecy that potential clash of the civilizations in the future Professor Samuel Huntington announced in 1993. In his book, *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*¹¹, Huntington emphasized that in the 21st century, an old world order based on the ideology shaped by the Western imperialism will be replaced by a new world order based on the ancient civilizations. And the propagation of the Islam, Hinduism, and the Eastern religions will greatly surpass that of the Christianity in the coming decades.

Years later, Professor Philip Jenkins pointed out in his book, *the Next Christendom*, that an important but was totally neglected trend that Christianity has

¹¹ Samuel Huntington, *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: First Simon & Schuster, 2005).

experienced explored advancement in the non-western countries. Professor Jenkins on one hand, commanded the view that Professor Huntington made that a future world order based on the ancient civilizations; but on the other hand, critiqued that Professor Huntington might have overestimated the propagations of the Islam, but underestimated that of the Christianity in the countries of Africa and Latin America.

And according to the estimate of World Christian Encyclopedia, a distinguished trend cannot be overlooked is that even though the number of the non-western Christians will surpass that of European Christians in 2050, the number of Christians in the Asian countries, where noted for its lengthy cultural traditions and high developed civilizations, is far less than that of the local, aboriginal religions.

In the post-colonialism, non-western area, two discrete cultural development models may be able to explain this phenomenon. One, in these areas where its civilization was not well developed or had been extinct before the western civilization took over, and its cultural development was in tandem with the colonialism. Distinctively, this area became an easy target of developing a sub-culture of Western Christian culture. Two, in these areas, where in the post-colonialism, political independence helped drive the cultural development in the direction, either rapidly diluted the influences of the west, or quickly developed a familiar, old, traditional, and conservative culture of its own. And in the latter, once releasing from the western colonial shadow, the pre-colonialism traditional culture, once more received its new fresh space and experienced greater cultural revival, but moving with a steady, pro-modern, conservative gesture. Compared with Latin American and Africa, Asian countries have developed a higher degree of

modernization than westernization, Latin America and Africa, on the contrary, westernization than modernization.

In other words, Confucianism, its development based on a length, traditional, ancient civilization, despite the damage occurred in the Cultural Revolution in China, remains strong in the life of Chinese people, whether in the mainland or overseas. And Lately, Confucianism was used as a cultural hedging tool against the imports and influences of western values, accompanying with the economic booming, China is reviving the study of Confucianism in order to develop a new form of socialism, which has the Chinese characteristics emphases.

Gradually open of the Chinese government immigration policy, more and more intellectuals from China are heading the United States; and the majority of them potentially will choose to stay in the U.S. for good. And also many ethnical people of Chinese origin immigrants, with vast varieties of geographical background, are choosing the U.S. as their immigration destination. They are heavily influenced by the Confucianism and its culture, consciously or subconsciously. And many of them are likely to be exposed to Christianity when they come to the United States. In short, preaching gospel to the people with Confucianism culture in postmodern era poses a great challenge to us. With this vast of missionary potential in mind, developing a missional strategy geared toward this particular group is urgent.¹²

Constructive Dialogue- From many Christian scholars' views, in today postmodern, multicultural society, dialogues between different cultures is not only

¹² According to one conservative estimate, the number of Christians in China is roughly fifty millions (4% of the population). Most of the believers can be distinctively categorized in four groups: rural, literates, seniors, and women. That phenomenon alarms us and posts an urgent challenge for us to come up with a strategy of spreading the gospel to the intellectuals. Since, the political and economic resources are controlled by the elite group, who by far belong to the communist party.

inevitable but also essential. Back in the day when European missionary came to China, have attempted several times to dialogue with the emperor. Since then, constant flow of western missionaries tirelessly and indigenously risked their lives, bringing Christian religion to one of the oldest civilizations on earth. The year of 1998 marked the 200th anniversary of western missionary Robert Morrison came to China. And Christianity has gained an unforeseen momentum since the open door policy announced by the Chinese government in 1980's. More and more cultural exchanges between the Chinese traditions and its western counterpart have created an atmosphere of positive dialogues between Chinese traditions and its long time rivalry¹³, Christianity. And of these dialogues, Confucianism has received unprecedented attention and is systematically studies by mainland scholars as well as the Western ones. Of these scholars, Professor Neville of Boston University, an ordained minister and a professed Christian, said, "A large number of scholars for years have attempted to develop Confucianism into a world philosophy rather than one limited to a specific historical culture."¹⁴ But we may not go as radical as Dr. Neville had envisioned in his book, as Dr. Tu of Harvard University commented, "when Neville began to talk about ritual propriety (*Li*) as Boston Confucian, he raised challenging questions about the nature of the Confucian discourse that he envisions and the prospects of the Confucian tradition becoming an integral part of American intellectual self-reflexivity."¹⁵

If Christianity has been prejudicially perceived as the mainstream or the majority of the western culture, then as Dr. Tu suggested, dialogue among civilizations is

¹³ Christianity has long been seen and believed, mistakenly or intentionally, as a western imperialist aggression by the Chinese intellectuals.

¹⁴ Robert Cummings Neville, *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World* (New York: State University of New York, 2000), p. xxiv.

¹⁵ Cummings, *Boston Confucianism*, xiii.

inevitable and inspirational, the necessity of exclusive dichotomy “the West and the rest” mentality needs to be replaced by a holistic notion of the emerging world culture. Lately, in light of the assumption that the core values in Confucian moral self-cultivation are of profound significance for educating future generations of American leaders and the enhancement of the development of ethical intelligence derived from the introduction of the praxis of ritual practice, as well as cognitive intelligence, in liberal arts education, new possibility has been raised, the teachings of the Four Books (The Great Learning, The Analects, Mencius, and The Doctrine of the Mean) and Xunzi, together with selected writings and sayings of the Neo-Confucian masters (notable Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming), be incorporated into the curricula of American colleges.¹⁶

Apparently, Dr. Neville tries to reconfigure Confucianism as a contemporary philosophy of culture, introducing Confucianism to the world stage, not only to develop a world culture of philosophy through a creative reconstruction of American philosophy, but also by incorporating Confucianism, among other world philosophic cultures, into an intellectual endeavor: “to embrace all the traditions within the world culture of philosophy.”¹⁷ As Dr. Tu put it this way, “the world society will never be civilized until a genuine world culture is developed that respects the diverse cultures and harmonizes them to make crucial responses to such issues as care for environment, distributive justice, and the meaning of human life in cosmos.”¹⁸

Famous world class Sinologist and Philosophy professor of University of Hawaii Roger T. Ames responded to a recent teleconference interview. He believes that

¹⁶ Cummings, *Boston Confucianism*, xiv.

¹⁷ Cummings, *Boston Confucianism*, xiv.

¹⁸ Cummings, *Boston Confucianism*, xv.

Confucianism has gradually gained popularity and recognition worldwide.¹⁹ And, lately China has gradually moved away from her traditional communistic ideologies and at meantime slowly but steadily gained recognitions from her role in the world political influences and economical power. Potentially, Confucianism will be leveraged as a tool of culture encounter to the world intellective circle as China advances up onto the world stage as a source of cultural power house.

Lately, professor Ames has pioneered a dialogue between the traditional well-received American Pragmatism philosophy and the Chinese philosophy of Confucianism. He found the similarity between these two –isms provides an ideal platform for culture exchanges and convergences. He predicts the philosophy of Confucius will be treated equally if not over, and be studied as many other great western philosophers as, Kant, Hume, and other world class philosophers had been studied.

In the postmodern era, that since there is no absolute truth; the opportunities for the dialogues among different teachings of cultures and religions will be more frequent than ever. As Confucianism is gaining popularity, obviously, be acquainted with the teachings of the Confucianism as well as learning the skills of the dialogue before engaging with the people with Confucianism background is very important.

The Asian Culture Tsunami- Centuries and centuries before western influence came to Asia; Confucianism has been one of the most ancient philosophic traditions and has been the dominant intellectual influence in East Asia cultures, to name a few Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. And not long ago, Chinese civilization heavily influenced by Confucianism has been identified by scholar in the axial age. The term axial age, to describe the period from 800 BC to 200 BC, is coined by German

¹⁹ Teleconference by the reporter of Hsin-Hua Newspaper Wang Pao on October 17.

philosopher Karl Jaspers, in his *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (*The Origin and Goal of History*),²⁰ identified a number of key axial age thinkers as having had a profound influence on future philosophy and religion, and identified characteristics common to each area from which those thinkers emerged. Jaspers saw in these developments in religion and philosophy a striking parallel without any obvious direct transmission of ideas from one region to the other, having found no recorded proof of any extensive intercommunication between Ancient Greece, the Middle East, India, and China. The significance of this is that it implied that in the reality of the world history that building impressive civilizations without ever knowing God's revelation in the Bible or in Jesus Christ is not only possible, but a historical fact.

The teaching of Confucianism is not a stranger in the Europe. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Jesuit missionaries who entered China and became scholars and even officials at the Chinese court, wrote letter after letter to Europe they told of the wonderful new philosopher they had discovered. The Confucius became known to Europe just at the beginning of the philosophic movement known as the Enlightenment. A large numbers of philosophers, including Leibniz, Wolff, and Voltaire, as well as statesmen and scholars, using his name and his ideas to further their arguments, and they themselves were influenced in the process. And scholars also believed the philosophy of Confucius also contributed some importance in the development of democratic ideals in Europe and in the background of French Revolution.²¹ Later, in the middle of the last century, considering the remarks of the renowned Confucianism scholars, Professor H. G. Creel who has high view of Confucius once said, "Among a large fraction of mankind,

²⁰ Karl Jaspers, *The origin and goal of history* Translated by Michael Bullock (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

²¹ H. G. Creel, *Confucius and the Chinese Way* (New York, Harper & Row, 1949). 5.

Confucius has for many centuries been considered the most important man that ever lived.”²² And Confucius’ life “...was to influence human history as few have done.”²³ We cannot ignore these findings from renowned western scholars and doing monologue while thinking about preaching the good news to some high educated scholars and men of letters in the West and in the East.

In the last couples of decades, the rising economic miracles of Asian countries, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and Singapore in the late sixties, early seventies of the last century, whose Asian work ethic and moral values based mainly on the Confucianism has voiced loudly and constantly challenging against the traditional western paradigms. One of the western paradigms was the work ethics and the moral values based on Christianity. The famous Sinologist William De Barry warned in his book, *Asian Values and Human Rights*,²⁴ that even though the western industrial countries have contributed greatly in the areas of the science, the democracy, the freedom issues, and the human rights to the world civilization; the ancient eastern civilizations can contribute their shares beneficial to the world as well. There are rich universal significances embedded in the traditional Chinese culture that not only beneficial to the west but also help correct the deviances in the western cultures.

In sum, since many ethnical people of Chinese origin are coming to the U.S. And many of them are likely to be exposed to Christianity after they arrived. Preaching gospel to them poses a great challenge to the Christian churches. And it would be unrealistic to anticipate an easy one-way monologue in delivering the gospel message to them. Hence, developing an effective missional strategy with a set of strong apologetic trainings

²² Creel, *Confucius and the Chinese Way*, xi.

²³ Creel, *Confucius and the Chinese Way*, 1.

²⁴ William de Barry, *Asian Values and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1998).

developed in the context of Confucianism cultures will reduce the chance of failure.

Many churches in North America have noticed this potential ethnic group for a while and many of their evangelistic methods have been geared toward this particular group. But unfortunately, the evangelistic methods used, when closely examined, were developed in the western context without taking the audience cultural background into considerations.

It is the author of the thesis' wish that the above brief summary serves as a wake-up call to those who are interested in preaching the gospel to the people of Confucianism background within the EFC and without. The traditional western approach to evangelize the people of Confucianism will not work to its best result. In light of these urgencies, a change of attitude in regard to the communication of Gospel is called for.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will be conducted with the following approaches: the thematic approach, the sociological approach, the theological approach and the theoretical approach.

Thematic Approach

Confucianism- The Nutshell of Confucius Thoughts, Pre-*Ch'in* Periods

Several centuries before BC, the teachings of Chinese ethics and morality have been well developed, at the time of the final unification of China under *Ch'in* dynasty, the ethical system of Confucianism has matured.

“Te” and “Shau”

Historians believed that China has already developed into a civilized society around 2100-2200 B.C.E. during the first dynasty *Sha* 夏, but whether there was an ethical system or not was still unclear. Chinese history began with the *Shang* 商 state in the fourteenth century B.C.E. Later on, the *Shang* was conquered by the *Chou* 周 people, who established the *Chou* dynasty. Not until eleventh century B.C.E., the ethical system of *Chou* converged, which was indebted to a combination of a religion system based on “Te” and a moral system based on “Shau”¹, coupling with the political system of *Chou* dynasty. This emerge has a lot to do with the chaotic social turmoil conditions in the society when *Chou* was established.

When compared with the historical progress of a society from aboriginal tribe to a more advanced civilization, two sharp contrasts between the “East” and the “West” can be found. As a representative, the Greek, the “Classic Ancient” process has three stages:

¹The former, a religion system based on “Te” 德, originally the word means “gains”; and the latter, a moral system based on “Shau” 孝, means filial duty.

starts from the individual stage, then progressing to privatizing stage, and later became an establishment of one nation stage; the privatizing stage later absorbed by that nation and eventually became an individual-nation dualism. In contrast, the “Asian Ancient” process has similar three stages: starts from the individual stage, skipping privatizing stage, directly emerging to become one family of the same bloodline stage, which is advancing into one nation stage; the family of bloodline later merges with that nation and eventually became a family-nation dualism. The individual, in a sense, was absorbed into a system consists of families of bloodline; making the developing of a privatizing individualized group very difficult.

And since the dynasty of *Sha*, *Chi*, the son of *Yu* continued to be enthroned as king, until later a more stable west-*Ch’ou* feudal system was developed. Under this feudal system, bloodline closely tied with the kingship and through land endowment to those close-tie bloodline families, and also through the father-son inheritance system guidelines. Inevitably any further growth of any individual depends on the degree of his family tie that in many cases prevents an individual from breaking away from his family, economically, physically and mentally.

Researches tell us, the backbone of the ethical system of west-*Ch’ou* dynasty-“*Shau*” and “*Te*”, is a blend colossal of morality, religion, and politic, and is a feudal, dual dimensions moral system consists of one vertical relationship between father and son, and another horizontal relationship between brothers and brothers. The primary emphasis of the people of *Chou* about moral relationship is “*Shau*. ” “*Shau*” demands son to pay support, respect, and submission to his own father. Some scholars believe that the concept of “*Shau*” did not come to exist until the monogamy system, the father-son

relationship, and the assurance of children's monopoly of their father's inheritance were in place. Of course, this philosophical materialism view of relationship emphasized more on the trade-off of rights-and-obligations, less on human selfless love; it totally denied the possibility of a good father-and-son relationship without the materialized favors from father. Nevertheless, when we discovered many non-isolated cases of cruel murders and slaughters between father and sons, and between siblings in order to gain political power during that period of the history, this philosophical materialism view of father-son relationship seems plausible and convincing. And perhaps this very cruelty of slaughters within family forced the people of *Chou* later developed a morality system emphasis on "Shau," in order to deter any further murderous acts within the family.

The content of "Shau" includes, first, shows financial support to and respect of parents and second, ancestry worshiping. At that time, support and respect parents is an accept norms but the ancestry worshiping is only reserved to the emperor, feudal officials and their descendants. Through history, the idea of "Shau" gradually evolved and solidified and became the holding pillar for the feudal system. And it also played an indispensable part in withholding and protecting the existing political interests.

The idea of "Shau" has been well accepted by Confucius and his followers' generation after generation and finally coupling with "Chung"² and became the basic moral requirement in the feudal society. It is the "Shau" differentiates human from the rest of the beasts. And in Chinese writing, the word "Shau" comprises the left part of the word "teaching," and it is safe to say; only human can be taught to respect his parents.

The idea of "Chung" and "Shau" came a long way, and their effect still can be felt even today especially in the ethnic group of Hakka community, where a Christ converter

² "Chung" 忠, means loyalty.

without his parents' permission is doomed to receiving condemn from his direct family, and at the same time, losing his reputation and credibility in his community. The concept of "Chung" and "Shau", to certain degree, has become a hurdle to many seekers' final conversion to Christianity.

Many scholars and Sinologists had discovered the faulty concept of "Chung" and "Shau" which was intentionally manipulated and abused in many areas of life in history and was falsely passed down generation to generation. In the book *Asian Values and Human Rights*, Author clearly critiqued that human relationships championed by Mencius was "as a literate tradition Confucianism was also concerned from the start with individuals in relation to each other, as well as with the role of the scholar-official in his relations with the ruler and other scholars, teachers and students."³ "The paradigm of human relationships was stated by Mencius as:

Between parent and child there is to be affection
Between ruler and minister, rightness
Between husband and wife [gender] distinctions
Between older and younger [siblings] an order of precedence
Between friends, trustworthiness.⁴

And since this paradigm was strongly affirmed in later tradition, as well as in East Asian countries, there are significant in several points. First, it focuses in the family, the moral relationships and the priorities among them. Next, it implied reciprocity in between relations; "the obligations are differentiated but mutual and shared."⁵ In other words, parent and child relation is a mutual and affection bondage and same as the relation is

³ William Theodore De Bary, *Asian Values and Human Rights*, 17.

⁴ William Theodore De Bary, *The Trouble with Confucianism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 63.

⁵ De Bary, *Asian Values and Human Rights*, 18.

applied to between husband/wife relationships. Same principle is true to the respect for precedence with the sibling relationship.

Interesting to note that in this human relationships paradigm, loyalty was not included in the ruler/minister relationship, nor filial piety mentioned in the parent/child relationship. In other word, a traditional common discourse which regards loyalty and filial duty as two Confucius virtues is actually missing in the original Confucianism thought. It is clear in the Analects, “Confucius has nothing to do with the mindless conformism or coercive measure to enforce filial duty.”⁶ Confucius insisted, however, on moral cultivation and consensual social rituals without forcing legal compulsions in dealing with such human problems. In other words, a genuine tradition of Confucian ritual has been neglected and replaced with the authoritarian, law and order legalism.

In history, the relationship between ruler/minister described in Mencius, had been misinterpreted as “ruler/subject” relationship. But as Mencius well understood, what is right is a mutual obligation between ruler and minister; loyalty is attached to principle, not persons. In other word, superficial notions of unquestioning loyalty to the ruler are against the teachings of Confucianism.

Similar to “Shau”, the second emphasis is “Te.” Its original meaning has no moral sense. Later research found that in the original word it implied “the results of warring,” which means loot or spoils from war. It also means gains, or earns. For a person who has a lot of “Te,” means he is a rich man. Later on the word evolved and finally won a tag of moral sense.

Unlike *ἀρετή* in Greek, or *arête* in English, both words enclose a sense of morality, however, to the people of *Chou*, “Te” evolved and accepted with a meaning of great

⁶ De Bary, *Asian Values and Human Rights*, 19.

adventures. For a person who has “*Te*” means he or she has acquired the skills of contender for emperor throne. And since the emperor has “*Te*” and is capable of providing good life and maintaining prosperity for his people, spontaneously he not only assumed a “protector” role sitting on an earthly throne but also won the divine worthy approval. To the emperor, for him to be continuously blessed by the “Heaven,” he needs to maintain his great “*Te*” status quo, and to win approval from his subjects. Thus, the emperor is responsible to the “Heaven” and to his people. In a way, the abstract sense of “Heaven” deity is replaced by the earthly emperor who has a lot of “*Te*.” In the people of *Chou*’s eyes, Emperor is not an inherited position but an honorable status earned through hard-work. He has to earn the divine approval through constant acquiring “*Te*.” His “*Te*” earned him divine status and replaced the “Heaven” in order to be in charge of the earthly affairs. “*Te*” not only enclosed with moral sense but also clothed with a political garment. In other words, “Heaven,” “*Te*,” and “Protection” three discrete idea intertwined with each other and turned into a triadic dinosaur of religion, morality, and politics.

From these investigations, it is safely to say that in the early *Chou*’s feudal system, the stability of the society is at the disposal of the leaders in the community and at the same time, under the influence of the moral system which the community has adopted. Therefore, at the time of west-*Chou*, the morality under feudal system is supported by a combination of two power group; the emperor and the nobles. Since “*Te*” is recognized as the prerequisite requirement for the political contenders, the idea of “*Te*” was adopted and manipulated by the later follower of Confucius. To no surprise, “*Te*” was later hijacked and solidified by many ambitious political contenders for their attribution for their legitimacy of power thirst.

At the turn of Spring-Autumn and the Warring States, (Spring-Autumn 770 -476 BC; Warring States 475 - 221 BC) the use of iron tool, the surfacing of the private-own landlord and the cumulative private capitals, and the privatizing of commerce, coupling with the political turmoil, the land system of emperor-own was too shaky to exist. These economic changes directly impact the earlier, relative stable feudal system, which is based on human-oriented relationship and the emperor-noble power structure. The relationships among them deteriorated due to the social changes, which shook the very foundation of the feudal system: emperor against nobles, father against son, brothers against brothers, and sons against sons. Finally, the emperor of *Chou* lost his control over the nobles and had its heavy toll on the society; its ripple effect can be felt in the social, economic, and moral level.

The overall moral trend of the society is to be believed, depends on the cultivation and the praxis of each individual. During *Chou* period, since the emperor lost his superior power over his nobles and “emperor” was hijacked as a pulpit by the super-power noble in commanding the rest of the nobles. Therefore, the original milky relationship between emperor and noble is polluted and replaced by the power-thirst, greedy relationship of nobles. Originally, the idea of loyalty means “without selfish,” that is, loyal to the emperor, now since the power of the emperor is stripped, the loyalty is demanded by the nobles from his servants within the state. Therefore, loyalty is demanded not pay to the emperor, but to the nobles of each state. In other words, the idea of loyalty to “nation” is replaced with loyalty to the “strong hold nobles,” and later on in the Chinese history, totalitarian regime leader pocketed “nation” as personal disposal and demanded unconditional loyalty from his subjects. Thus, loyalty became a commodity

ready to sell to the highest bidder; the strong nobles became the speaker of the nation. The “noble-is-nation” confusion can be seen in camouflaged under the father-son relationship. Back in that chaotic time, there are situations that father needed to take order from his son. But many times, with unending craving of power, father might manipulate the father-son relationship and demand “*Shau*” from his son in order to quench his power thirst. Son became the tool of ascending steps to the success for his own father. This father-son manipulation is not uncommon even today.

Later on, in the era of the Spring-Autumn and the Warring States, the Intellects group *Shi* surfaced to fill the voids created by the disruption of the feudal system and emerged in response to this chaotic society and became the irreplaceable force in shaping the ethic thoughts of Confucianism, Meniscus, and Moist. During this period, besides “*Te*” and “*Shau*,” other important thoughts emerged and eventually evolved and became the foundations of the Confucianism, of them are as follows:

The emphasis of “*Te*” is based on the conception that “human is good.” The establish of the humanism represents that the Chinese people start searching the answers in regard to the source of their moral and ethic concerns, from that point, religion has lost its appeal, the source of the moral ethic issues for the Chinese people are reduced and confined within the rational and human category.

Among the East and Western researchers on the teachings of Confucianism, the answer to the question “Whether Confucianism is a philosophy or a religion” has long been unsettled. Lately, it has gradually converged to a viewpoint that Confucianism is in the branch of philosophy, but with religious conviction. When viewed from the religious perspective, the Chinese cultural history has demonstrated a progressive stages,

beginning with from a view of godly, to pantheism, and then onto atheism. Roughly speaking, scholars divide this progress into three periods. Before *Chou* Dynasty, China was a state of godly, and its people clung close to a pantheistic heaven than to a personalized heaven; from Spring-Fall and Warring State, the Chinese people gradually digressed to pantheism; and from *Tang* and *Sung* Dynasties, moved to atheism. And later on from *Ming* and *Ch'ing* Dynasties, Chinese culture evolved to her final stage, a matured form of humanism.

The Chinese “Consciousness of Society”- *Shi*⁷

Since the 30's and 40's of the last century, Chinese scholars finally reached a consensus that the historical *Shi* was long gone and has been replaced by the modern “intellectual.” The time the *Shi* disappeared was back in 1905 when the last Chinese dynasty *Ching* abolished its “national examination,” which had been designated as an official instrument in selecting *Shi*. Even so, the spirit of *Shi* has never been obsolete but instead, disguised with masquerade continuing somewhat haunting even to the modern intellectual’s consciousness in the present society.⁸

The *Shi* tradition can be traced back to Confucius' time; it has lasted for twenty five hundred years. But *Shi* showed different meaning in different time and evolved and changes along with the development of the Chinese history. The meaning of the western intellectual sometimes is equally taken as “the conscious of society,” because the

⁷ The traditional Chinese *intellectual*, *Shi*. “士”

⁸ Yu Ying-shih (traditional Chinese: 余英時) is a Chinese American historian. He is an Emeritus Professor of East Asian Studies and History at Princeton University. He came to Harvard University in the United States in 1955, and earned his PhD in 1962. He then lectured in various universities including University of Michigan, Harvard, Yale University and Princeton University. He is one of the few people to have been tenured at three Ivy League universities., On November 15, 2006, Ying-shih was the third recipient of the John W. Kluge Prize for lifetime achievement in the study of humanity. He shares the prize with John Hope Franklin.

intellectual, on one hand, advocate certain basic values and at the same time, using these values to critique social injustice, and on the other hands, the *intellectual* put these basic values into practice and accept them as social norms. Western *intellectual* not only devotes their life time in one profession or skill, but also shows deeply concerns with social and global welfares and social related issues beyond personal level, and even transcends personal level of caring about these issues. In this sense, people believed that the western *intellectual* has a spirit of religious conviction. There are similarities among western *intellectual* and Confucius *Shi*, and of those, professionalism and basic values advicator stand out. May be it help explained why the Chinese *Shi* would react so furious toward Christianity and toward the people associated with it, when they felt that the traditional Chinese values had been threatened by western religion. It was *Shi* the advicator stood up against western Christianity.

Western *intellectual*, however, did not come to exist until eighteenth century, because the “reason” of the Greek tradition has been overshadowed and hijacked by the “faith” tradition of Hebrew until during the Enlightenment era, when “reason” was released from its captivity of “faith.” On the contrary, *Shi* has two thousand year of tradition. And like western *intellectual*, Confucius *Shi* does not belong to any specific social class in the social hierarchy. That is how western *intellectual* and Confucius *Shi* both carry the similar kind of social responsibility- “the consciousness of society.”

In short, even the Confucius *Shi* is not equally taken as the modern *intellectual*; the concept of “the consciousness of society” still buried deeply in the modern Chinese *intellectual* and has taken the leading role in undertaking the responsibility of caring the society. And in search for the answer why the Chinese *intellectual Shi*, during the

“invasion” of the western Christianity, bravely rose up against the odds, it was the phantom of this consciousness of society displayed in its full scale.

In contrast to the non-Christian, multi-cultural, pluralistic Asia and Africa, the historical Europe and the latest developed America were under the monopolistic dominant of Christian culture. But in Chinese society, in the eyes of *Shi*, even though the introduction of the Nestorian branch of the Christianity can be traced back to the eight century Tang Dynasty, Christianity has long been perceived as a western European, imperialistic, intruder and is one among the many non-mainstream, outsider cultures. In contrast to Daoism and Buddhism religions whose beliefs and doctrines (if there is any!) traditionally were accepted as their face value, and conventionally, since it requires believers invest time in the bible study and in the understanding of the doctrines, Christianity has been regarded as an advanced, industrial trendy culture suitable only to the educated folks.

“What does it mean for a person brought up in a Chinese culture?” Yutang Lin asked in his book.⁹ “Can his culture and national heritage easily be uprooted and replaced by a good Puritan Christian education after conversion?” To many ordinary people, the answer is “No,” nor to many educated, Confucianism-influenced *intellectual*. To the latter, becoming a Christian is virtually excommunicated themselves from the Chinese community and justified the accusation that they were “eating foreign religion.”¹⁰ And according to Lin, “two matters—opium and ancestor worship—which caused a deep sense of injury and revulsion against the West in the one case, and a sense of being denationalized on the part of a Chinese Christian in the other.” Many Chinese people who

⁹ Yutang Lin, *From Pagan to Christian* (New York: Avon Book Corporation, 1959), 29.

¹⁰ Lin, *From Pagan to Christian*, 29.

are in their 50's, living in a time almost a century later than Mr. Lin did, the shame caused by the Opium War did not affect the conversion a bit, forbidden to participate in the ancestor worship, not the sense of idolatry, however, drove them into reconsideration. Are they ready to discard "the embodiment of reverence for the past and continuity with the past, and of the strong and deep family system and therefore of the Chinese motivation for living?"¹¹ It may be easier to wash away a Chinaman's sins with Jesus' blood than remove an indelible pride in his ancestors.¹² To any conscious Chinese, a rather popular contrast notion that between darkness and light, or to any argument of that, Christianity being "true," Confucianism is therefore "false" will never sell. They can never do to dismiss the Buddhist religion with the simple phrase "heathen idolatry." And it would not simply do to say that Jesus' teachings on love and humility are right, therefore Lao-tse's teachings on the power of love are wrong.¹³

Therefore, it is just impossible for any sensible Chinese *intellectual* to convert to Christianity without raising any reasonable doubts or placing reservations in his mind. And to its worst, many a time, they even refuse to just listen to what Christianity has to offer before politely turning off their hearts. According to one renowned Chinese scholar's study¹⁴ on the famous Chinese *intellectuals* born between 1880 and 1962, in his

¹¹ Lin, *From Pagan to Christian*, 29.

¹² Lin, *From Pagan to Christian*, 30. The idea was borrowed from Mr. Yutang Lin's original wordings, "Scratch a Chinaman and you will find an indelible pride in his ancestors."

¹³ Lin, *From Pagan to Christian*, 55.

¹⁴ In his study, Dr. Lu listed eleven most famous thinkers at the time in his analysis. Of these, several have international fame at the times and were acquainted to the western world, Chen Duxiu (Chinese 陳獨秀 1880-1942), was a co-founder of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. He was its first Chairman and first General Secretary. Chen was an educator, philosopher, and politician. Cai Yuanpei (Chinese 蔡元培 1876 –1940) was a Chinese educator and the chancellor of the Peking University, known for his critical evaluation of the Chinese culture that led to the influential May Fourth Movement. In his thinking, Cai was heavily influenced by Anarchism. Lastly, but not the least, Hu Shih (Chinese: 胡適 1891-1962), was a Chinese philosopher and essayist. Hu is widely recognized today as a key contributor to Chinese liberalism

analyses, it shows that the reasons why the Chinese *intellectuals* against Christianity in these periods of time. The study tells us that the roots of anti-Christianity are based on the following observations: 1) Besides Sino-nationalism, not Marxism but scientism, is the main cause of the anti-Christianity trend. Even though Marxism did have its share in these *intellectuals*' mind. While science was good for the benefits of Chinese people, scientism advocated that science was the only solution to the chaotic problems China was facing. 2) Liberalism was the other forefront against Christianity at the time. However, the liberalism the *intellectuals* advocated was affected by the scientism, which was not based on western-like reasoning per se, but was based more on the traditional Confucianism beliefs. The solutions liberalists proposed to replace religion were deeply affected by the thoughts of Confucianism root. In other words, many *intellectuals* were holding pre-judge against Christianity was not based on facts but on Sino-nationalism and biased liberalism. Even today, many Chinese *intellectual* are still hold grudge against Christianity without any well founded arguments and sensible reasons. In sum, to be an effective communicator of the Gospel to the *intellectual* Confucian Chinese demands a lot more training of evangelism than "Four Spiritual Laws" of Gospel.

Morality without Religion¹⁵

Could morality exist without religion? Or, could a set of universal, standardized principles of morality based on pure human reasoning be distilled from every civilization on earth without religious ingredient? Since the Enlightenment, the western philosophers (e.g. Hume and Kant) have attempted to establish a set of rational justification or

and language reform in his advocacy for the use of vernacular Chinese. He was learning under John Dewey at Columbia University and he was also an influential Redology scholar.

¹⁵This section is greatly indebted to the book written by Mr. Lo, *East and West cultural exchange and Missionaries*. (Beijing, Beijing University Press, 2000). 63-92.

vindication for morality, which can be used as a set of standardized norms without the ingredient of religion. Thus morality retains its own identity detaching itself from religion.

But according to the famous American philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre that, any claim of morality without rational justification or vindication doomed failure.¹⁶ The American Ethics scholar J. B. Schneewind basically agreed with MacIntyre's research findings¹⁷, however, he disagreed with a notion of the Enlightenment oversimplification that morality is merely a reduction of the secularization process of reason over faith.

And in summary, Schneewind concludes that from 17th – 18th century there were three basic issues concerning ethics: 1) the source of a perfect moral system, is from outer part of men or pre-exist inner part of men? 2) Does the sound morality is a universal phenomenon or only is reserved to a particular group of people? 3) Is the motive of the praxis of the morality pre-existing in human or human need help from the "Other"?

These three issues are all concerning morality and religion. The first issue is the question of the source of morality; the second issue is the knowledge of morality; and the third issue is the motive of morality. Schneewind summarized the above into one basic issue: how stronghold is the human ownership of morality? What he meant was that: without religion, can human be capable of acquiring a sound knowledge of morality? And without religion, can human be capable of motive himself in practicing this sound morality?

When compared with other religions, on the general moral level, many non-Christian moral systems do exhibit similar requirements as that of Christianity does. For example, Hinduism, Judaism, and Confucianism have similar moral teachings as "Ten

¹⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

¹⁷ Schneewind, J. B. *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). 8.

Commandments.” And from the perspective of social disciplines and teachings, for the existence of human prosperity and welfare, morality is necessary. In other words, on the general moral level Christian ethics does not enjoy the sole claim; other societies of non-Christian ethnic background can do without Christian ethics. That is, morality is independent of religion.

But as the society grows, the commands of the general level morality find inadequately dealing with moral and ethic issues under the considerations of complex context, such as, euthanasia, abortion, and etc. These complex cases can only be scrutinized under special level moral commands. For example, “Do not kill” takes different meanings under different religions. Altruism is a general requirement and practice under many religions, to a point, under certain conditions where self life sacrifice is necessary and is also eulogized. In these cases, morality cannot be independent from religion.

In other words, the praxis of these altruistic acts cannot be understood by rational explanations or operated in the vacuum of religion. Altruistic, sacrificing love can only be sprung from religious, unselfish motive. Rational morality is an intact theory until it is tested; only with the aid of the religious motive can it assure its authenticity. Authentic morality cannot exist by itself; it has to go in tandem with true religion.

Some scholars believe that Confucianism is more than an intellectual philosophy; it contains religious elements. And many Confucianism believers content that Confucianism has one of the highest morality claims, through hard-works of self-cultivated and self discipline, person of high moral standard can possibly be taught and groomed without the aid of religion. But even though Confucianism talks about love, in it

love is expressed in more of a mutual, reciprocal, and rational humanity sense, than a religious, altruistic, and sacrificing conviction. When compared with other religions, Confucianism is a rational knowledge of humanism, and its love principle is motivated by self-cultivated works, which are propelled from the inner self-conscious search and extended to the outer moral display of optimistic worldview, believing that through proper teachings and hard works, every individual can recover his original goodness and pure consciousness.

Emmanuel Kant's famous advocate that God's existence, has yet proved the necessity for human being doing good work, but does give people an incentive of continuing doing it. God is not the presupposition or the motive for a person to continue living a moral life; God's existence is the product of the rational conclusion of it. But Kant's rational conclusion of God's existence can be easily defeated by either Camus' absurdity of life¹⁸, or Plato's living a happiness and goodness life without God, or Buddhism's cause and effect principle¹⁹ without the "Other". In other words, in theory, under these claims living a moral live without the aid of religion is possible; but in praxis, moral life without religion is out of question.

In summary, on the general moral level, a moral systems advocated by many non-Christians can do away without the aid of religion. But on the special moral level commands, such as, altruism demands life sacrifice, morality cannot do away without the aid of religious convictions. And Emmanuel Kant's rational conclusion of God's

¹⁸ If we accept that life has no meaning for us to value it, then there will be a redundant of even considering any value of goodness or morality in life. Therefore, morality has no value in human experience; its existing does not make us either happier or better.

¹⁹ Buddhism "Reap as you sow" philosophy may never seemed to be a realistic life experience, yet Buddhism believes that despite sowing goodness does not warrant a harvest in this life, but when the time comes, goodness will eventually overturn the evil. Therefore, the worldview, happiness or not in this life is not important, can do away without the existence of God.

existence does not hold up to those people who believe in no personal God religion or in nihilism philosophy. Therefore, Christianity does not enjoy a unique claim of higher standardized, moral way of living, as some Confucianism followers claimed, especially the intellectual group, have always suspect any valid claim: a higher standard of moral living can only be achieved through the teachings of Christianity. No personal God religion and nihilism philosophy is beyond the scope of our study. The author of this thesis has no intention to address this issue in details in this report. But in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) there was a further reaction against the speculative philosophy of both Zhu and Wang²⁰ and the movement known as *hanxue*²¹ of the learning of Han [Dynasty] arose to combat what were taken to be the grave mistakes of both Zhu and Wang. This last great Chinese Neo-Confucian movement is also known as the school of evidential research because of its commitment to historical and philological research in contradistinction to the Song and Ming fascination with speculative metaphysics and personal moral self-cultivation.

And the later development of Neo-Confucianism, whose masters along with being highly philosophical, are also teachers of various forms of personal moral self-cultivation. And from the Neo-Confucian perspective, merely abstract knowledge was useless unless conjoined with ethical self reflection and cultivation that eventuated in proper moral behavior and social praxis. In other words, the Neo-Confucians has seen the fault teachings of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming which emphasized more on theory than praxis, sought to promote a unified vision of humane flourishing that would end with a person

²⁰ Zhu Xi the great philosopher of Song Dynasty (1130-1200) and Wang Yangming (1472-1529) the great philosopher of Ming Dynasty.

²¹ *Hanxue*- 漢學。

becoming a sage or worthy by means of various forms of self-cultivation.²² Philosophical of religion critics tend to categorize the Confucianism under the “optimistic” humanism which believes that human nature is basically good and undermines the evilness of human beings and hence through restlessly self-cultivation saint status of man can be achieved.

In sum, there is a great amount of the Confucius teachings deserved fair notice, but the demise of the Confucianism lies not on its theory but on its praxis. It is not the Confucianism, but the praxis that human cannot live up to that made these teachings failed. Clearly denotes in Romans 7:15-19, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Postmodern and Missional Ecclesiology

Many scholars have attempted to tie the modernity down to a certain frame of time in history, and one of the definitions by author Oden, “the modernity period spans the time from 1789-1989- that is, the time from the French Revolution to the fall of the Berlin wall.”²³ Several events occurred before and after this period have profound impacts to the rest of the world thereafter:

Renaissance- Renaissance's (French for 'rebirth', or *Rinascimento* in Italian), was a cultural movement that spanned roughly the 14th through the 17th century, beginning in

²² John H. Berthrong, “Neo- Confucian Philosophy” in Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Boston: Boston University 2005, accessed 13 February 2009); available from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/neo-conf/>.

²³ Thomas C. Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2003), 7.

Italy in the late Middle Ages and later spreading to the rest of Europe.²⁴ Some nineteenth century historians were keen to emphasize that the Renaissance represented a clear "break" from medieval thought and practices, some modern historians have instead focused on the continuity between the two eras. And for the sake of the discussion, this thesis focus only on its effects exerted on science and religion.

Some have seen the changes during this period as a scientific revolution heralding the beginning of the modern age, because one of the most significant developments was a process for discovery, the scientific method. The new way of learning about the world focused on empirical evidence than the divine revelation. Thus it not only affected scientific method but also changed the Theology, which has dominated the way people perceived the relationship between human un-aided reason and the divine revelation.

Modern Era- During and after the Renaissance, several thinkers have contributed their thoughts to the development of the modernity. Two of the most prominent thinkers: Rene Descrates (1596-1650) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Their coming of "the Cartesian and Kantian's perspectives on human knowledge and human being (existence) and flourishing, one has the four major strands of modernity which still casts a long shadow in our times": 1) The quest for Certainty— how do I know? Human lives with tension of uncertainty. 2) The emphasis of practicality- not a radical denial of God, but by replacing revelation with reason, one has no real room for transcendence. 3) The inviolable nature of individuality- the thinking of self, human autonomy, and

²⁴ Author unknown. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, accessed 30 April 2011; available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance#Science>.

congregational autonomy. 4) Progressive nature of human endeavors- the world was out there for human discovery and improvement; more knowledge, better life, etc. ²⁵

Of the two thinkers, Immanuel Kant not only contributed to the rise of the man-centered self-sufficient mentality in this period but also push the divine factor totally outside of human economy.²⁶ Right after the Renaissance which elevated humankind to the center of reality, at the dawn of the Enlightenment the modern era was given life. “Building on the Renaissance, the Enlightenment elevated the industrial self to the center of the world.”²⁷ While Descartes defined human nature as a thinking substance and the human person as an autonomous rational subject, Isaac Newton provided the scientific framework for modernity, picturing the physical world as a machine the laws and regularity of which could be discerned by the human mind.²⁸ And under the Enlightenment Project led by Jurgen Habermas, bearing the goal of the human intellectual quest to unlock the secrets of the universe in order to master nature for human benefit and create a better world, finally led to the modernity characteristics of the twentieth century, which has sought to bring rational management to life in order to improve human existence through technology.

There are basic epistemological assumptions under the Enlightenment Project: that knowledge is certain, objective, and good. And knowledge is accessible to human mind. Thus, the demand of certain knowledge motivates the modern inquirer in search of

²⁵ Class Notes of Doctor Lim, Doctor of Ministry Program, *Ministry to Post-Modern Generations*, Gordon-Conwell theological Seminary, South Hamilton campus, Massachusetts, May 2007.

²⁶ Kant separates divine and human into two-tier compartment; concentrates only on human factor without considering any possible intervene from the divine. The development of this optimistic self-sufficient, can-do mentality makes believe that nothing is un-control, and unconquered by human efforts have help pushed the modern scientific development into an unknown frontier foreign to their processor. And ironically it is this unguarded mentality indebted to the disastrous events, two World Wars erupted in this period.

²⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 1996). 2.

²⁸ Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 3.

a method of demonstrating the essential correctness of many specific doctrines, such as: philosophic, scientific, religious, moral, and political. Many aspects of reality need to be put under the scrutiny of reason and under certain criterion. In other words, human rational capabilities were elevated to an absolute state and dictate that method to be used.

The knowledge is not only certain but also objective. The assumption of objectivity leads the modernist to claim access to dispassionate knowledge. The objectivity applies to the objects need to be observed; it also applies to the observer self. In addition to assuming the knowledge is certain and objective, Enlightenment mentality also assumes that knowledge is inherently good. It leads to believe that progress is inevitable and optimistic. Science, coupled with acquiring knowledge through education will eventually free us from our vulnerability to nature and all social bondage. As Stanley J. Grenz interpreted, “Enlightenment optimism, together with the focus on reason, elevates on human freedom. Suspects are all beliefs that seem to curtail autonomy or to be based on some external authority rather than reason (and experience). The Enlightenment project understands freedom largely in individual terms. In fact, the modern ideal champions the autonomous self, the self-determining subject who exists outside any tradition or community.”²⁹ Therefore, modernity is optimistically and equally taken as independent and autonomous symbol free from any community and tradition. Modernity means autonomous, self-sufficient and self independent.

The modern period, according to Oden, equivalent to the length of Enlightenment period, is “characteristically embraced a secular worldview that once cast a long

²⁹ David Ray Griffin, *God and Religion in the Postmodern World: Essay in Postmodern Theology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 21-23, 54-56.

ideological spell-but has now fallen into irreversible decline.”³⁰ It is this decline and collapse of the Enlightenment ideologies, couples with the demise of the Christendom provide us the opportunities to engage with the postmodern era.

Postmodernism- Even though postmodern has many different interpretations, and ways of definitions, at times there are more confused than clarified; yet, deserve a sound and tangible “ballpark” platform to start the dialogue. Situating ourselves in a larger contemporary historical, cultural, and theological contexts put seems like a good start.³¹ If the fall of Berlin Wall can be seen as the beginning of the postmodern era, we are in it. “Postmodernity, most scholars agreed is a continuity of modernity, is often an intensification of modernity, particularly with respect to notions of freedom, the use of technology, and so on.”³² And this “continuity” view often caught us off-guard into adopting “An Enlightenment optimism about the role of supposedly neutral reason in the recognition of truth.”³³ In other words, if we operate a postmodern “presuppositional” apologetics without knowing our faith has been “polluted” with modernism- fail to recognize the effects of sin on reason, then the question this thesis concern: what can the postmodern era offer to the Christian church?

Smith suggested as long as we recognize the role of presuppositions in both, “postmodernism” gives us an opportunity to engage post-modern mentality with “proclamation-the kerygmatic vocation of proclaiming the Word made flesh.”³⁴

³⁰ Thomas C. Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2003), 7.

³¹ Class Notes of Doctor Lim, Doctor of Ministry Program, *Ministry to Post-Modern Generations*, Gordon-Conwell theological Seminary, South Hamilton campus, Massachusetts, May 2007.

³² James K. A. Smith, *Who's is afraid of Postmodernism?* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 26.

³³ Smith, *Who's is afraid of Postmodernism?*, 27.

³⁴ Smith, *Who's is afraid of Postmodernism?*, 28.

In other words, Smith urges church to engaging with and responding to the postmodern mentality using the imitation of the incarnation life of Jesus Christ. Although Christians have mixed and varied responses to postmodernism, one can never underestimate the influence of the three French philosophers: Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault. And since these three philosophers' messages have been wrongly interpreted and mistakenly used, author Smith seized his opportunity and tried in finding redemptive elements from their writings so that a new venue can be paved into future postmodern ministries.

Distilled from the reading of the book by Smith, the main points of the above three French philosophers can be summarized as follows:

1) Jacques Derrida: "there is nothing outside the text." Derrida's claim: "there is nothing outside the text" means "there is no proper understanding of the Text apart from the scripture-governed community of the church."³⁵ And this proper understanding may not be so obvious to unbelievers, since it requires a gift, "the presuppositions and horizons that make it possible to properly "read" creation are grace gifts that attend redemption and regeneration."³⁶ Rightly coined to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:13-14 "¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

³⁵ Smith, *Who's is afraid of Postmodernism?*, 57.

³⁶ Smith, *Who's is afraid of Postmodernism?*, 49.

As the theological exegesis of John 12:27-33 demonstrates,³⁷ without the grace gift, of the three possible explanations: naturalistic, supernaturalistic, and Christological, the “sound from heaven” could be decoded as either one of the other two interpretations contrary to what the Christian community has always interpreted. Therefore, every text can only be properly understood through the grace gift as the Christian community had consistently insisted in the last two millennia.

In other words, in Genesis 1:3 “And God said, “let there be light,” and there was light.” the World was perceived through the Word. Same as Apostle John understands in John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The creation was the action through the Word; Jesus is the Word. Derrida’s claim: “there is nothing outside the text,” which when applied to creation, every creation on earth is created through Christ.

2) Jean-Francois Lyotard: Postmodern is as “incredulity toward metanarratives.” Is postmodernity encapsulated in Lyotard’s statement-indeed inimical to the grand Christian narrative? The answer is both No and Yes. No, because Smith showed that metanarratives is a distinctly modern phenomenon: they are stories not only tell a grand story but also “the scientific stories, told by modern rationalism, scientific naturalism, or sociobiology as they claim to be demonstrated by reason alone.”³⁸ And postmodern is the critique of Enlightenment rationality. Therefore, postmodern is against the idea of metanarratives. Smith believes Lyotard is an ally to Christians: “Orthodox Christian faith actually requires that we, stop believing in metanarratives.”³⁹

³⁷ Class Notes of Doctor Lim, Doctor of Ministry Program, *Ministry to Post-Modern Generations*, Gordon-Conwell theological Seminary, South Hamilton campus, Massachusetts, May 2007.

³⁸ James K. A. Smith, *Who's is afraid of Postmodernism?* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 65.

³⁹ Smith, *Who's is afraid of Postmodernism?*, 64.

What Lyotard meant metanarratives was not the scope of these narratives but the nature of the claims they make. The grand Christian narrative was not claimed by modern rationality, rather by faith alone. “When Lyotard describes postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives, he indicates a suspicion and critique of the very idea of an autonomous reason, a universal rationality without ultimate commitments.”⁴⁰ And “For the postmodernist, every scientist is a believer.”⁴¹ In addition, as Smith argues even the very idea of an autonomous reason cannot do away without employing faith. Therefore, Christian faith is as good if not better than any other faith claims, including sciences. In postmodern arena Christianity is one of many contenders competing against any other truth claims.

In other word, Christianity requires faith seeker be convicted then believe, then be baptized. Then later on this conviction leads to his personal world view shift and becomes a grand metanarrative only matter to him. And conviction is compelled by the Holy Spirit, not by reason. In this sense, the grand Christian narrative is localized and confined to personal level. But this personal sense of understanding is edified within Christian faith community and become a grand experience based on the central figure of the cross-Christ.

The Holy Spirit at work is the solution to the early Reformationist Calvin’s concern on the certainty and assurance of faith and reason. Calvin believes “the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his Word, so also the word will not find acceptance in men’s hearts before it is sealed

⁴⁰ Smith, *Who’s is afraid of Postmodernism?*, 71.

⁴¹ Smith, *Who’s is afraid of Postmodernism?*, 68.

by the inward testimony of the Spirit.”⁴² Also, Abraham Kuyper concluded on the mode of divine inspiration of Scripture: “In Christ we only see and handle the divine, when transformed in our inner being and life, and without this preceding change of heart and our acceptance of Christ, even though an angel were to come down from heaven in visible form, no one would ever subject himself to the word of God.”⁴³ For Christians the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinitarian God who is always at work, and is omniscient around believers. Thus we see an opportunity in postmodern context of ministry in church- emphasis on the genuine personal encounter experience with the Holy Spirit during communion and Eucharist and our daily lives.

Yes, to the same question, if the apologetic proclamation from revelation is being reduced to the game of modernity, then God’s messages revealed in the incarnation and the Scriptures cannot be distinguished from the god of philosophical theism.⁴⁴ And when all the faith claims be reduced to a morality competing game, Christianity will lose its distinctiveness based on Christ. In this sense, postmodernism is inimical to grand Christian narrative.

3) Michael Foucault: “Power is Knowledge.” In order to counter-formation the culture exerts on church, a link between Lyotard’s emphasis on the role of narrative and Foucault’s emphasis on the role of formation can be drawn: “discipline is aimed at formation for a specific end, and that end is determined by our founding narrative.”⁴⁵

Foucault suggested us three countermeasures to fight the covertness of the culture, which is inconsistent to the message of the gospel. What we need first is to recognize the

⁴² Class Notes of Doctor Lim, Doctor of Ministry Program, *Ministry to Post-Modern Generations*, Gordon-Conwell theological Seminary, South Hamilton campus, Massachusetts, May 2007.

⁴³ Lim, Class Notes.

⁴⁴ Lim, Class Notes.

⁴⁵ James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 103.

disciplinary formation takes place in culture, then second, to recognize the antithesis between the dominant culture understanding of the human calling and the biblical understanding of our ultimate vocation, and third, enact counterdisciplines that will form us into the kinds of people that God calls us to be.⁴⁶

But the ultimate goal of sanctification and discipleship is to shape us into a certain kind of person: who is like Jesus, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit, loving God and neighbor, caring for the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. How do we become that kind of person? It takes practice. It requires practices of sanctification and church discipline.

In summary of Smith's Book, the burden of proof is laid actually on the shoulder of the church to show the world how the Scripture is supposedly to be interpreted as the Christian community intended, not in words but in actions. God renews and transforms us- a place where the practices of being the body of Christ from us into the image of the Son. The church is a place to learn patience by practice. The fruit of the Spirit emerges in our lives from the seeds planted by the practices of being the church; and when the church begins to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, it becomes a witness to a postmodern world. (John 17)

As Smith agrees "Nothing is more countercultural than a community serving the Suffering Servant in a world devoted to consumption and violence. But the church will have this countercultural, prophetic witness only when it jettisons its own modernity; in that respect postmodernism can be another catalyst for the church to be the church."⁴⁷ Well said by Leithart: "The first and chief defense of the gospel, the first 'letter of

⁴⁶ Smith, *Who's afraid of Postmodernism?*, 106.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Who's afraid of Postmodernism?*, 30.

recommendation' not only for Paul but for Jesus, is not an argument but the life of the church conformed to Christ by the Spirit in service and suffering.”⁴⁸

Working Paradigm- What paradigm do we adjust to work in the postmodern ministry? Regardless if the cultural wars existed, we live in the cultures and we are called to engage with the particular culture where we live in. Moral base religion like Confucianism is a popular culture, despise of its essence of counter-Christianity.

When we look closer to the Reformation history, Calvin gives us quite a useful tool in engaging with this culture. In Calvin's mind without the knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self. And this awareness of needing God is not from our corrupted nature but from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. It is this conviction from the Holy Spirit tells us we are sinners despite we may be a moral sound citizen. Without the aid from the Holy Spirit no one is able to see his self-deprivation nature and be able to proclaim: Jesus is the Lord. And because of the redemptive power of Jesus Christ who reconciled God to us; we become parts of the winning team with Jesus Christ.

But that realization separates us apart from the world, not out of the world. We are called to re-enter the world as a witness of the good news. That is exactly what Calvin's call for authenticity: “The Christian life is not a matter of the tongue but of the inmost heart.” In Calvin's mind “and the sum of the Christian life is-“self-denial and affirmation of the need of the other.”⁴⁹

The ideal of being a benefit to the community where Christians live in is not new, during the Medieval the Monasticism was called for the same idea, but it was lost in the process of building the Christendom. Calvin's incarnational way of Christian life led to

⁴⁸ Class Notes of Doctor Lim, Doctor of Ministry Program, *Ministry to Post-Modern Generations*, Gordon-Conwell theological Seminary, South Hamilton campus, Massachusetts, May 2007.

⁴⁹ Lim, Class Notes.

the social reform in Geneva has a profound effect to the community even till today. If Christian legacy can be understood as: to deliver the answers and evidence and equip others to do the same. Then Calvin has left a legacy for us to “do the same.” In that sense, Calvin had given us an urgent directive to engage with the rise of xenophobia in Europe. In the Institute 3.7.6, we find Calvin saying: “Love of neighbor is not dependent upon manner of humans but looks to God.” We as Christians have only “one way in which to achieve what is not merely difficult but utterly against human nature: to love those who hate us, to repay their evil deeds with benefits.... It is that we remember not to consider men’s evil intention but to look upon the image of God in them,...”⁵⁰ Thus, self-denial is one “take” we can get from Calvin. That is exactly what Jesus had called his disciples for: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Mat 16:24)

If Calvin gave us one venue to confront postmodern culture, then Heidelberg Catechism offers us another tool to reshape our discipleship in postmodern context. Heidelberg Catechism re-sharpens our edges to counter and to cross current cultures, for example, question 1 in the Catechism is asking:

- 1) Belonging— we are not a group consists of isolated individuals; we have a belonging in the larger social context. In contrast to current culture- individualism and isolation.
- 2) Redemption- a free, eternal life which is purchased by Jesus Christ. In contrast to no past, no present, no future, no way out mentality.
- 3) The purpose of human life- to live for the heavenly Father through the aid from the Holy Spirit. In contrast to no purpose and meaning in life.

⁵⁰ Lim, Class Notes.

It touches the very basic values of human's existence. It is the lost of belonging disrupt our relationship with the creator. It is the self-sufficient, men-centered, do-without-God mentality, traced back to the creation when Adam and eve ate the knowledge of fruit forbidden by God, separated us from the eternal relationship.

Missional Church Mentality Centers in God's Grace- As authors indicated in the book, Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional, that "In Christendom (where church and nation/culture/society were hand-in-glove, and it was assumed that almost everybody was Christian somehow), the church's mission only related to cultures other than the dominant culture. This was especially the case in Europe and in North America. But Christendom is dying. Our context in North America is more like that of the New Testament church, where the church is on the margins, not at the center of society."⁵¹ This description says well about the EFC church in general. EFC gospel propagation moved in tandem with the campus bibles study group flourished in the late 70's and early 80's. At the times, most new Taiwanese new immigrants came to U.S. through student visa, and then converted in the campus bible study group, then landed a job and became U.S citizen. Getting Immigration visa to U.S. was part of the Taiwanese college graduates' dream at the time, partly because there were few high-end jobs for college graduates in Taiwan, but major reason was because the political situation was unsettled between China and Taiwan.

EFC movement has done great work in preaching gospel inside the Taiwanese community in U.S., yet undeniable outside stray sheep are far more than inside pan. Now, there is very few Taiwanese immigrants coming to U.S. but there are a great number of

⁵¹ Barret, Lois Y. *Treasure in Clay Jars- Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), x.

Chinese immigrants coming to the U. S. to stay. EFC needs to discard former cultural burden and get on to new missionary strategy. EFC need also to re-define what missionary means to EFC and to Lord's kingdom is? According to Barret's book, "A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to sets things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it and to restore it to what God always intended for the world."⁵² EFC has a lot to learn from this statement.

When church lost her prophetic voice against this world and adapted to suit secular influence, it becomes a useless noisy trumpet exploited at human's will and at the mercy of manipulation. As an exemplified example described in Barret's book, Pastor John McLaverty recognized the local and the local context of neighbor had changed and he began to see his role as "to help my local faith community to begin to make paradigm shift towards being a missional church rather than a mission church." Eventually his central vision took shape. He believed a faithful missional congregation is a faith community this is "called back to love Jesus and to walk outward in stewardship," and is "to be God's sent out people."⁵³

Incarnational Living Life Style- Professor Bruce Riggins of McCormick Theological Seminary met a very dedicated Christian woman working with underprivileged people in London. He asked what it was that inspired her faith and action. She told him this story:

She was a Jew fleeing the Gestapo in France during World War II. She knew she was close to being caught and wanted to give up. She was hiding in a home in France, and a widow came and said it was time to flee. "It's no use," the Jewish woman said to the widow. "They'll find me anyway. They are so close."

⁵² Lois Y. *Treasure in Clay Jars*, x.

⁵³ Lois Y. *Treasure in Clay Jars*, 24.

The widow, a Christian, replied, "Yes, they will find someone here, but it's time for you to leave. Go with these people to safety. I will keep your identification and wait here."

She then understood the plan; the Gestapo would find the widow and think she was the fleeing Jew. When the woman asked the widow why she would do this, the widow responded, "It's the least I can do. Christ has already done that and more for me."

The widow was caught and imprisoned, allowing the Jewish lady to escape. Within six months the widow died in a concentration camp. The Jewish lady never forgot. She too became a follower of Jesus Christ and lived her life for others. She said she came to Christ through the greatest love a person can give—self-sacrifice. This is exactly how Jesus purchased our salvation: He was caught in our sin so we could escape.⁵⁴

Thematic Approach Summary

From the investigations in this section, the following summaries can be listed:

- 1) Deep down in the bone of any Chinese, maintaining a good relationship within the Chinese community where he lives is very important. But in the postmodern, where relationship means different thing to different people, surprisingly the postmodern era offers Christianity an irreplaceable opportunity to outreaching to the Chinese people, for in the postmodern era relationship is what Christian churches always emphasize and treasure.
- 2) Two basic moral requirements in the feudal society, the idea of "*Shau*" and "*Chung*", a traditional common discourse which regards loyalty and filial duty as two Confucius virtues is actually missing in the original Confucianism thought. The genuine tradition of Confucian ritual has been neglected and replaced with the authoritarian, law and order legalism.
- 3) The solutions the Chinese liberalists proposed to replace religion

⁵⁴ Tom Conant, Illustration contributed by Tom Conant, accessed 29 March 2010; available from <http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/sermon-illustration-stories-61627.asp>.

were deeply affected by the thoughts of Confucianism root. Many *intellectuals* were holding prejudge against Christianity was not based on facts but on Sino-nationalism and biased liberalism. Many Chinese *intellectual* are still hold grudge against Christianity without any well founded arguments and sensible reasons. Since many Chinese *Intellectual* see themselves as the conscious of society, their influences on the upper level of the society cannot be underestimated. 4) On the general moral level, a moral system can do away without the aid of religion. But on the special moral level commands, such as, altruism demands life sacrifice, morality cannot do away without the aid of religious convictions. Even though Confucianism talks about love, in it love is expressed in more of a mutual, reciprocal, and rational humanity sense, than a religious, altruistic, and sacrificing conviction. 5) The failure of the human praxis demise the good teachings of Confucianism, for human cannot live up to what they are not. Similar to the Confucianism optimism, the Enlightenment optimism champions the autonomous self, the self-determining subject who exists outside any tradition or community. It is optimistically and equally taken as independent and autonomous symbol free from any "Other" assist. 6) And from proper understanding of Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault, the Christian community have acquired better arsenal in outreaching to the faith seekers and can compete with any other faith claims with the help of the Holy Spirit. 7) The church has to carry the burden of proof to show the world how the Scripture is supposedly to be interpreted as the Christian community intended, not in words but in actions. The fruit of the Spirit emerges in our lives from the seeds planted by the practices of being the church; and when the church begins to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, it becomes a witness to a postmodern world (John 17). 8) Well said by Leithart: "The first and chief defense of the

gospel, the first ‘letter of recommendation’ not only for Paul but for Jesus, is not an argument but the life of the church conformed to Christ by the Spirit in service and suffering.”⁵⁵ There are desert saints and monks in any religion worldwide. 9) Modernity means autonomous, self-sufficient and self independent displayed the similar secular (without God) worldview as that of the society of Confucianism. In the postmodern society, the failing of the Enlightenment ideologies and the gradual fading of the teachings of Confucianism on the civil level, both provide an unprecedented opportunity for church, through relationship, to engage with the incarnation life of Jesus Christ.

Sociological Approach

One Socio-religious PhD thesis was submitted to analyze the factors and processes which promote the persistence and transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles (EFCLA) in 1995. In that thesis, the Ph. D. candidate’s (hereafter refers as Chao) theoretical framework was based on “the open system and resource mobilization perspective that stresses structural conduciveness, environment resources, and organizational dynamics was developed to explain how changes in the structural conditions and environmental resources and effects of organizational dynamics promoted or retarded the transformation of the EFCLA.

Utilizing a case study design, Chao’s study focused on two transformation aspects in the EFCLA: the transformation of the exclusive Taiwanese-speaking membership policy and of the traditional mainline religious practices. The findings reveal that the persistence and transformation of the EFCLA depend on how the organizational dynamics in the church responded to changes in the structural conditions and

⁵⁵ Class Notes of Doctor Lim, Doctor of Ministry Program, *Ministry to Post-Modern Generations*, Gordon-Conwell theological Seminary, South Hamilton campus, Massachusetts, May 2007.

environmental resources. Also the findings showed a positive relation between the transformation in the exclusive Taiwanese-speaking member policy and the transformation of the traditional mainline religious practices and EFCLA church growth.”⁵⁶

And since the EFCLA was the first church under EFC and was also believed to be the thrust behind the EFC movement. It seems a great idea to use the success of EFCLA as a referenced model and then use the same theoretical frame work to investigate how the EFC Nasa, which shared many resemblances with the EFCLA did not undergo the same transformations as that of the EFCLA but instead went through similar approach to achieve a relative smaller success. EFC Nasa is a church which is under the author’s pastorship from 2004 to present. Using EFC Nasa as a model, the author intended to demonstrate how a smaller EFC church can be as healthy and successful as a larger counterpart in the postmodern society. But first, a brief history of the EFC movement will be introduced as follows.

The EFC Movement Past and Present

Past- The first Evangelical Formosan Church was established on October 11th, 1970 in Los Angeles. But its original gathering can be traced back to the winter of 1965 when a group of oversea Christians from Taiwan were participating a bible study conducted by Pastor Tsai, and with also another group of Cantonese-speaking Christians later in the May of 1966 founded and registered as First Evangelical Church with the State of California.

⁵⁶ Hsing-Kuang Chao, “Mobilizing to Grow: The Persistence and Transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles” (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1995),viii.

Later, Pastor Tsai went back to Philippines, and Pastor Lo succeeded in conducting Sunday service and leading the church ministry. In 1967, with relentless effort from the congregation, an old house on the Fargo Street in the City of Silver Lake was purchased and converted to a church building for Sunday service. On the August, 8th, 1967 the church was officially open for service.

The original service was conducted in English and translated into Mandarin or Taiwanese every other week. Three years later, with the unanimous blessings from Pastor Lo and the deacon board, forty Taiwanese-speaking Brothers and Sisters left the First Evangelical Church and founded the Formosan Evangelical Church, in order to have a Taiwanese-speaking Sunday service. The service was conducted in a church building in the City of Alhambra.

At its inception, deacon board had a vision of founding a Taiwanese church without any financial aid from any Western churches. Thus, deacon board decided to put one tenth of the general offering aside as Evangelism fund, and one fourth for the church building fund. As the number of the members increased, on February 28th, 1973 church moved a church building in El Sereno. Pastor Chiu was recruited to help Pastor Kao in leading church service. And later Pastor Kao left for Hong Kong, and Pastor Felix Liu was recruited to succeed Pastor Kao. On October 1st, 1975, Pastor Liu was installed as the Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Formosan Church. The introduction of "Cell Group" to the congregation by Pastor Liu the church experienced great growth. In 1977, church moved to a larger building in Highland Park to meet this need.

In the subsequent span of three years, with the success of planted churches in four different locations in southern California, (Walnut, Torrance, San Fernando, Garden

Grove), on October 6th, 1982 five churches met in Highland Park for a joint thanksgiving service and on that day, Evangelical Formosan Church General Assembly was officially founded.

From 1984 to 85, a total of ten churches across the U. S. continental state line joined EFCGA. And by 1990, with God's blessings, across country border line, a total of twenty five churches are in the EFCGA. By the end of 1995, a total of thirty two churches under EFCGA in the world. There are eleven in Los Angeles; fifteen outside California, two in Canada, one in Costa Rica, and three in New Zealand and Australia.

In the year of 1996, EFCGA had a vision of a total of fifty churches world-wide by the year of 2000. With God's blessing, by the end of 2000, a total of fifty one churches were operating around the globe. And with the gradual and increasing need from the English-speaking congregation and Mandarin-speaking congregation, English service was established and later Mandarin service was also implemented into the existing Taiwanese congregation. Thus, the church name "Formosan Evangelical Church" was changed to "Evangelical Formosan Church" to reflect the change and to enhance the spreading of the gospel to the English and Mandarin speaking community.

Early in the 1980's, with a burning heart of spreading gospel to the people in Taiwan, the vision of "bringing Gospel to Taiwan" was discussed openly in EFCGA. However, in discussion with the Presbyterian Brothers and Sisters in Taiwan, a conclusion was reached: the political climate was not mature enough and did not warrant a try. So EFCGA moved his attention to the Taiwanese immigrant communities in New Zealand and Australia. But by the end of the 1980's, the opportunity to spread gospel to the countrymen back in Taiwan came and the zeal to do so was getting stronger and

stronger. So in the year of 1996 EFCGA annual meeting, “Taiwan Mission” was rekindled. And since the political climate had been dramatically changed in Taiwan; Taiwan had became a democratic country. So the EFCGA Taiwan Mission Department was established and Pastor Liu was put in charge of the operation. The Taiwan Mission was adopted, after local mission (in L. A. and outside of California), oversea mission (in New Zealand and Australia), and cross-cultural mission (in English and Mandarin language), as one of the EFCGA missionary goals. Soon the EFC Evangelistic Center officially registered with Taiwan government and the church of the EFC Taipei opened its door on the Easter Sunday of 1996. After almost two hundred years the Western missionary Morrison brought gospel to Taiwan, a Taiwanese-established gospel organization EFCGA was officially established on Taiwanese soil.

Present- As of today, EFCGA has established five branches of ministry: 1) EFC Churches; 2) Logos Evangelical Seminary, LES (www.logos-seminary.edu) is an ATS accredited seminary; 3) EFC Communication Center (EFCCC); 4) EFC Prayer Garden- was founded for EFC church as a retreat and conference center; 5) EFC Global Enrichment Center- a well recognized cross-denominational missionary center. The EFC churches are listed in tables 1-3. Chronically, EFCLA was the first EFC church founded (1970) and EFC Glendora was the last (2010). They are many Chinese descendant Christian churches in the globe but EFC is the only Taiwanese church has reached denomination-like⁵⁷ organization. The EFC Gospel movement is distinctive herself from other previous gospel movements of Chinese ethnicity in the following manner: 1)

⁵⁷ As of today, due to her relative young age since first inception, EFC is still regarded by many as a gospel movement. With the latest release of the “Faith and Order”, in which the document describes what EFC is, EFC is moving closer to her goal as an independent evangelical denomination. The Presbyterian church of Taiwan founded by Canadian missionary has a history of 150 years.

Taiwanese Based- Since its early inception, EFC church leaders had determined to establish a free-of-western-fund, independent Taiwanese church. All the EFC churches income comes from weekly Sunday offerings. And through the EFCGA church planting strategy, each new planted church received a one-time funding support from the rest of the EFC churches. 2) Global Vision- EFCGA aims gospel spreading at the global horizon.

Table 1- EFC Churches Founded in North America

Country	Church Name	Founded Year
California	Los Angeles	1970
Minnesota	Twin Cities	1975
California	East Valley	1979
California	South Bay	1980
California	San Fernando Valley	1982
California	Orange County	1982
California	Arcadia	1985
Texas	Houston	1985
Texas	San Antonio	1985
Colorado	Colorado	1985
California	Berkeley	1986
District of Columbia	Washington D.C.	1987
Louisiana	New Orleans	1987
California	Hacienda Hts.	1988
California	Cerritos	1988
California	Irvine	1988
Texas	Nasa	1988
Arizona	Phoenix	1988
California	San Diego	1989
North Carolina	North Carolina	1989
California	Alhambra	1991
Florida	South Florida	1991
California	Inland Empire	1992
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	1995
Canada	Toronto	1995
Canada	Greater Vancouver	1997
Florida	Orlando	1997
Maryland	Baltimore	1998
California	Chino Valley	1999
California	Rowland Hts.	2000
California	Grace Bible	2000
California	Saddleback Valley	2000
Illinois	Chicago	2000
California	Harvest Berkeley	2008
California	Glendora	2010

Each of her five branches has adopted unique mission statement but with one identical vision- spreading gospel.

At the early year of the EFC, every church was establishing as a Taiwanese-speaking ethnic church, but today, many EFC has become multi-linguistic and multiethnic church. In general, there are at least two language-speaking congregations in any EFC, either English and Taiwanese, or English and Mandarin. There are some EFC churches with English, Taiwanese, and Chinese language congregations. The church participants (or their parents) are either from Taiwan, Mainland China, Hong Kong, or the other South East Asian country. A few Asian America young people who are either descendant of the church's members or from other area are also members, depending on the size of each EFC.

Table 2- EFC Churches Founded Outside of North America

Costa Rica	San Jose	1989
New Zealand	New Zealand	1990
	Auckland	1996
	North Shore	1997
	East Coast Bays	2003
	West Auckland	2006
Australia	Melbourne	1989
	Rohi	1990
	Sydney	1990
	Epping	1998
	Maroubra	2006

Also, there are more and more interracial marriage families come to EFC. Most of them consist of American husbands and Mainland Chinese wives. In addition, many church members were from mainline Presbyterian backgrounds, though many EFC have been more open to believing in the gift of the Holy Spirit but few have adopted a kind of Pentecostal worship ritual. In Peter Wagner's language these changes in many

Table 3- EFC Churches Founded in Taiwan

Taiwan	Taipei	1997
	Taichung	1997
	Kaohsiung	1998
	Bethel	1999
	Tainan	1999
	Hsingchuang	2000
	Chianan	2001
	San-Hai-Guan	2003
	Hsin Chu	2004
	Beautiful Gate	2004
	Agape	2004
	Hsinying	2005
	Puli	2006
	Nei Hu* ⁵⁸	2006
	Chang Hua	2006
	Shinshe*	2006
	Yungkung	2006
	Beidou*	2007
	Fengyuan*	2007
	Chung Yuan*	2007
	Faith Hope Love	2007
	Ping-Tung	2007
	Sweet Spring	2007
	Emmanuel*	2008
	Taiping	2008
	Shalu Afar*	2008
	Lotung*	2008
	Central Taiwan Science Park*	2008
	Morning Star*	2008
	Rengxiong*	2008
	Fountain Blessing*	2008
	Tso-Nan*	2008
	Gan Lin*	2008
	Dali*	2009
	Yuan-Lin*	2009
	Forever*	2009
	An Tia*	2009
	Tree of Life*	2009
	Sweet Grace*	2009

⁵⁸ * Asterisk mark indicates the church is still partially subsided, either by private funding, or by “mother” church outside Taiwan. According to current church planning guideline, there are three stages before a final independent church is founded. First stage, starting as a prayer station, no financial subsidiary is provided. Second stage, a Gospel Station, will be subsided for three years, but financial support gradually abating. Finally, an independent church is founded. After three years of subsidiary at second stage, each church will be either financial independent or dissolved afterward.

evangelical churches is called “The Third Wave Movement of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁹ EFC believes that the Holy Spirit plays an indispensable role in believer’s conversion. The work of the Holy Spirit is part of the Triune God’s manifestation. This work to the believer is first-hand personal experience and also God-man relational.

After 40 years of EFC movement, the letter E, F, and C has digressed from its original meanings. It was not until lately, the letter E F C has always been understood as: Evangelical to Formosan (Taiwanese) Churches, emphasizing on preaching gospel to oversea-born Taiwanese in the U. S. A (台語福音教會) using the Taiwanese language. And about 10 years ago, E F C means Evangelical of Formosan Churches, emphasizing on historical identity and heritage, (台灣人福音教會) and culture. Now the meaning of E F C has became Evangelical from Formosan Churches, emphasizing on the preaching of the gospel to all nations (台灣福音教會).

Case Study Review⁶⁰

In this review, the EFCLA is to be used as a base reference and the EFC Nasa will be our target church. The author intended to apply Chao’s theory as a tool to investigate how the EFC Nasa experienced the similar transformation as that of the EFCLA.

Several sociological concepts will be first introduced to assist in understanding Chao’s study. An open system was used in Chao’s study. Several studies have revealed the value of the open system and resource mobilization perspective in the study of religious movement and the study of religious organization transformations (Zald and Denton, 1963; Beckford, 1973; Bromley and Shupe, 1979; Woodrum, 1982; Khalsa,

⁵⁹ According to Peter Wagner (1988), the First Wave was the Pentecostal Movement, and the Second was the charismatic movement. Since 1980, within traditional churches an increasing respect for the supernatural work of Holy Spirit, the Third wave movement has observed.

⁶⁰ The author of this thesis is greatly indebted to Chao’s study in writing up this portion of the thesis.

1986; Perrin, 1989). Chao writes, “In the open system and resource mobilization perspective, a religious is viewed as a social organization which attempts to mobilize human and other tangible and intangible resources from its environment for the purpose of spreading ideas and sensibilities of a religious nature.⁶¹ This perspective assumes organizations are open systems that are embedded in their environments, which includes other organizations and individuals. An organization’s success or failure and growth and contraction cannot be understood apart from its environment (Schutt, 1986:9). To achieve a goal or result, an organization must interact with its environment as an interaction process (Huse, 1980:52). When the environment of an organization is changed, an organization must, if it is to persist, be able to adapt to the changes (Zald and Denton, 1963:214). These notions imply that an open system and resource mobilization perspective takes the organization’s environment (both within and outside of the organization) into account. They also assume that factors outside of the organizations have important effects on what transpires within them (Davisson, 1985:15). The perspective also examines the variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkages of a social organization to other organizations, the dependence of organizations upon external support for success, and the tactics used by authorities to control of incorporate organizations (McCarthy and Zald, 1977:123). This view treats organizations as flexible entities which change in response to both internal and external pressures (Zald & Ash, 1966:518). This approach helps researchers examine how resources outside and within a church impacts on a church’s efforts, how a church responds and utilizes available resources, and how these processes affect a church’s development.

⁶¹ Hsing-Kuang Chao, Chao, “Mobilizing to Grow: The Persistence and Transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles” (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1995), 16.

According to the open system and resource mobilization perspective, Chao offered three major dimensions in his theoretical framework of persistence and transformation of an immigration Christian church. The three dimensions are: structural conduciveness, environmental resources, and organizational dynamics factors. And according to Zald and Ash (1966:520), there are three interrelated aspects of structural conditions which may affect the available resources and impact the persistence and transformation of an immigrant church. First, changing conditions in the immigrant community increases or decreases the potential support base of the church. Second, the immigrant community may satisfy or dissatisfied with the church's functions and goals over time. Third, the church exists in an environment with other organizations both religious and nonreligious, aimed at rather similar goals or competing for the same resources. In other words, the social and cultural oriented immigrant organizations will compete with the church's functions as an ethical symbol and the increased number of immigrant religions will share the existing religious market.⁶² The existing of these three aspects may impede church from obtaining resources and the church may be forced to accommodate the competition. And the church's existing strategy of recruiting new members within a non-Christian background immigrant community may be forced to adjust accordingly. "Structural conditions in the immigrant community and in American religious community are important because they can affect the resources available in the formation period."⁶³

It was the author's intention to briefly and selectively go through Chao's three dimensions: structural conduciveness, environmental resources, and organizational

⁶² Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 18.

⁶³ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 19.

dynamics. And in them, the author will compare how EFCLA and EFC Nasa reacts to these dimensions separately and distinctively.

Structural Conduciveness: Societal Realm

Discreditation of Monopolistic Services. Churches have been the earliest established immigrant organizations to serve their communities and to represent the communities to the outside world in the early immigration period because in the latter period, the monopoly on supplying religious goods and other services are challenged by other social and religious organizations. Especially if the immigrants from their homelands continue to come in large numbers, the immigrant communities will gradually establish or transplant more and diverse services to the community and competes with most churches' functions. Eventually the function of preservation of individual and ethnic identity of church will lose its appealing to non-Christians who are only interested in more on the services than Christian faith.

During the early 1970s, the EFCLA was one of the earliest and one of very few established immigrant organizations to serve the Taiwanese community in the Los Angeles area. EFCLA has provided monopolistic services and social and cultural functions to the Taiwanese community until other social and cultural immigrant organizations were founded. The loss of its monopolistic status of providing services to the community interrupted the EFCLA from continual access to potential members who had previously been interests in the church's social and cultural services.

In contrast to EFCLA, EFC Nasa was founded in 1989 in the city of Webster, in the NASA Johnson Space Center vicinity. At the time, there was already an existing Chinese Church of Clear Lake (CCCL) within 1,000 feet from the current EFC Nasa

church building. The CCCL, was founded 15 years earlier than EFC Nasa did, consists of earlier Cantonese-speaking and Mandarin-speaking students and professionals from mainly Hong Kong and Taiwan. Due to similar reasons as that of EFCLA, in order to preach gospel to the Taiwanese-speaking parents and Taiwanese immigrants, the Taiwanese Brothers and Sisters had determined to found a Taiwanese-speaking church in the area. At the time, there was another Taiwanese social organization, Clear Lake Taiwanese Association (CLTA) in the City of Clear Lake, which is adjacent to Webster and Johnson space Center.

But since it was founded, EFC Nasa has never enjoyed the monopolistic status as that of EFCLA; at best provide very limited social and cultural functions to the Taiwanese community, for example, leasing the church building for music recital and co-sponsored with CLTA for Taiwanese community activities, such as Chinese New Year celebration. But the church community did provide business opportunities for the Taiwanese businessman in the area, such as insurance agent. And at the time EFC Nasa was founded, the constituents of the church members were not as homogeneous- students, professionals or family members of students or professionals- as that of EFCLA. But later on, the EFC Nasa did become a homogeneous- professionals or family members of professionals church. And since the majority of the church members of the EFC Nasa are also the constituents of the CLTA, this overlap membership prevented EFC Nasa from exhibiting a clearer distinctiveness in the community. However, the Taiwanese community regards the EFC church as a voice of the gospel as well as a social function provider and a cultural symbol preserver.

In Chao's findings, before the mid-1970s, even though the EFCLA monopolistic status of providing social and cultural services was not challenged, the structural conditions were not conducive to the transformation of the EFCLA's original form. And during the 1970s and 1980s, Taiwanese immigrants continued to flow into Los Angeles. The social characteristics and experiences of the new immigrants were more diverse than their predecessors. More and more non-Christian organizations were founded and compete with EFCLA, providing social and cultural functions to the needed non-Christian immigrants. The final discreditation of the EFCLA monopolistic status helps transform EFCLA. First, attract Taiwanese immigrants who held different social-political stands and emphasized personal evangelism for church growth. Second, more people came to church to seek religious comfort instead of social services. This transformation drove EFCLA from a more ethnic and cultural oriented Taiwanese ethnic church to a more individual and evangelistic oriented sectarian church which in turn helped deliver English-speaking and finally in 1992 Mandarin-speaking congregation within EFCLA. And the withdrawal of EFCLA from social and cultural services, Chao believed, helped filter out the people who were interested in social and cultural services but were not interested in religious concerns which helped promoted the EFCLA to consider religious resources like the third wave Movement to meet the needs of these religious seekers.⁶⁴

In contrast, since the beginning of the EFC Nasa, the annual Thanksgiving feast has been the major joint activity for CLTA, the EFC Nasa and the Taiwanese community in the Clear Lake area. The original goal of the joint feast was to serve as a platform of collecting monetary donations for the social welfare of the community as well as the outreach opportunity for the Nasa church. But since the EFC Nasa did not enjoy the

⁶⁴ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 19.

continued flow of Taiwanese immigrants, nor the monopolistic status of providing social and cultural services to the Taiwanese community, nor witness the change of the social characteristics and experiences of the existing immigrants, thus the structural conditions were not conducive to the transformation of the EFC Nasa original form. And since 2005, the detectable steady decline of the attendance of CLTA has been noticed, partially due to the retirement and the family reunion relocation with the adult children lived out of the area, the outreach function of the Thanksgiving feast fell to the minimum. But when the author of this thesis assumed the pastoral office at EFC Nasa in 2004, the annual Thanksgiving feast has regained evangelistic momentum for church. The EFC Nasa has taken back the sole sponsor role of the event, so the gospel element of the Thanksgiving could be implemented in the feast. The year of 2010 Thanksgiving feast marks the nineteen successive anniversaries of church twenty three years of history.

Beside the Thanksgiving feast outreach opportunity, when the author of this thesis assumed the pastoral office in 2004, there has been an ongoing outreaching program⁶⁵ to the short-term Taiwanese exchange student at local university. In the beginning, that outreach program remains quiet, but lately there have been good news that some of the exchange students became Christians after they had returned to Taiwan. And also, the Thanksgiving feast became the outreach platform to the local regular graduate students from Taiwan. Interestingly, the transformation drove the original EFC Nasa from a more ethnic and cultural oriented Taiwanese ethnic church to a more individual and evangelistic oriented sectarian church which in turn helped deliver a persistent, consecutive outreach program aiming not on the Taiwanese immigrants but on the

⁶⁵ 2010 would mark the thirteen consecutive years of the outreach program held by the EFC Nasa, had University of Houston clear Lake Campus no cancelled the exchange program due to the person in charge retired from his teaching post.

exchange students from Taiwan. And when the author assumed pastoral office in 2004, there were English-speaking and Taiwanese-Mandarin translation Sunday services. The English Sunday service consists of mainly the high school students; the English-speaking youth group has been treated as a Taiwanese-speaking group outreach program than an official English congregation. But lately since May 2010, at foreseeing the demise of the English ministry after high school graduates bound for colleges, at suggestion from the author and cosigned by the Deacon Board, EFC Nasa has combined English, Taiwanese, and Mandarin speaking congregation into one joint Sunday service. And lately, three returned of the college graduates (found employment in Houston) came back to church which might have indirectly helped church deacons move to combine three different languages groups into one Sunday service. In short, the discreditation of monopolistic services never really occurred at EFC Nasa, but the church respond to change by the solidification and re-directing its resource to outreach program. The reason behind the transformation for the EFC Nasa was just opposite to the reason of the transformation in the EFCLA, the former was due to the lack of the English and Mandarin-speaking members, the latter was due to the great inflow of English and Mandarin-speaking members to church.

Past Experiences and Ethnic Relations. Because of past experiences, socio-political conflict will be intertwined with the issue of religious conflict (Gjerde, 1984:682). Therefore, a new immigrant religious organization may be found hostile to other ethnic groups or subgroups based on linguistic division or socio-political interests despite common national or cultural origins.⁶⁶ Same is true if on the other hand, the past experiences have been alleviated in the host society or the improvement of the conflict in

⁶⁶ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 21.

the homeland, the acceptance of different ethnic groups and subgroups from the same national and cultural origin will likely occur. The improvement of the socio-political situations in their homeland will weaken or reduce the internal tension among different ethnic groups and subgroups. Therefore, the alleviation of the past experiences in socio-political conflicts among first generation immigrants and the emergence of new ethnic identities among the American-born descendants will eclipse the ethnic boundaries and remove constraints for a church's ministry.⁶⁷

Historically, Taiwanese-speaking Taiwanese and Mandarin-speaking mainlanders had tensions before their immigration to the United States. Past experiences and ethnic relations between these two groups in the Taiwanese immigrant community prevented the members of these groups from accepting each other; sadly even among Christian Brothers and Sisters within the same church. Before the mid-1980s, very few Mandarin-speaking people persistently participated in the EFCLA, and all of them were the spouses of Taiwanese-speaking members. The detail historical reasons of schism of these two groups are out of the scope of this study. But the relation between these two groups finally improved due to several factors. According to Chao, first, in Taiwan, the success of economic development provided a precondition for its democratic transition in the 1980s. The first native Taiwanese president Lee succeeded the late president Chiang to the presidency. Second, the hostility between Chinese from China and Taiwanese has been alleviated since China adopted the open-door policy in 1979. More and more opportunities provided for Taiwanese and Chinese to interact with each other. Third, the increase of intermarriage between native Taiwanese and second generation Mandarin-speaking mainlanders and between second generation Taiwanese immigrants and

⁶⁷ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 22.

psychologically closed the distance among Taiwanese-speaking and Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese and Mandarin-speaking Chinese. Fourth, the language factor, more Chinese from every part of the world have settled down in Southern California in the 1980s and Mandarin has become a common language. Language brings people together. Chao concluded the impact of the environmental change is the main contributing factor for the development of Mandarin-speaking congregation in the EFCLA.

Due to its physical location of the church, generally speaking, the EFC Nasa has always been a rather close church community. It has received little influences from outside of the City of Clear Lake. On the surface level, these four factors mentioned above have little effect to the people attending EFC Nasa. But below the surface, especially after the President Lee became the first Taiwanese president, the tension between the Taiwanese-speaking Taiwanese and Mandarin-speaking mainlanders has been alleviated greatly.

Generally speaking, since the EFC Nasa was founded by professionals, the same as that of EFCLA, church members not only have displayed similar characters as described in this section above, but also displayed even more conservative toward any church related business. Tensions that used to exist have seen drastically alleviated. But somehow, the historical complex had not been erased completely. Since the leaders of the EFC Nasa has committed to spread gospel to all nations, on the ministerial level, many of the Mandarin-speaking and the intermarriage between native Taiwanese and second generation Mandarin-speaking mainlanders and between second generation Taiwanese immigrants seekers were among the regular participants in the small group activities. The

EFC Nasa has gradually shaken off its cultural burden and moved steps forward since the author assumed the pastoral office.

Structural Conduciveness: Religious Realm

Competition in Religious Market. The competitive nature of the religious market in the United States is one of the leading factors that impacts religious development in native American churches as well as immigrant churches (Finke and Iannaccone, 1993). That means that the immigrant churches have to adapt to the host environment to win people to the church. The principle of voluntary membership focuses church to gain their members by personal appeal, a fact which powerfully reinforces the tendencies toward the acceptance of evangelism and the principle of conversion (Niebuhr, 1967:205). The competition in the religious market give churches a strong incentive to adjust themselves to meet members and potential members' needs and to plant seed.

Chao's theoretical framework claimed that two competitive natures in the religious market in the EFCLA's environment have contributed to its development. First, the principle of voluntary membership indicates that a Taiwanese immigrant's affiliation with a Christian church like EFCLA is a matter of individual choice. Second, the competition for members among Taiwanese immigrant religions in the Los Angeles area was altered by the establishment of transplanted homeland religions in the later immigrant stage. Chao claimed, as a result of the competition between EFCLA and these religions influenced EFCLA practices. In order to recruit new members and retain old ones, EFCLA began to reflect individual's preference (such as personal religion and supernatural experiences). At the same time, EFCLA was forced to look for new religious markets outside the Taiwanese-speaking religious market. These two effects lead EFCLA

to transform its original Presbyterian background and its exclusive Taiwanese-speaking membership policy.

Before the mid-1970s, many Taiwanese immigrants participated in the EFCLA because they were attracted by the social and cultural services provided by the EFCLA. After the mid-1970s, many family members came to join the earlier immigrants and other arrivals had their relatives apply for coming to the United States, a new Taiwanese community emerged in the Los Angeles area. Many Taiwanese social organizations were being established to provide social and cultural activities, and they replaced EFCLA's functions in these area. EFCLA is no longer the first choice for the non-Christians who seek social and cultural services. But EFCLA, after mid-1970s, attracted more and more Christians and non-Christians to attend because of its rigorous religious training and individual evangelism demanding. Also, Chao observed that the EFCLA was opened to the influence of the Third Wave Movement, the practice of the gift of the Holy Spirit and the passionate worship ritual, became especially favored by the new immigrants and attracted many of them to join church.

In contrast, EFC Nasa, since most of the church members are first generation converter, and many have experienced spiritual help on their faith journey and later became devoted Christians. Even though there were another CLTA and other Taiwanese organizations in the Taiwanese community in the downtown Houston area, the EFC Nasa's church attendance had been relatively stable, due to its driving distance from Houston, during its past twenty three years of church history. And since earlier insistence of Taiwanese-speaking church policy, EFC Nasa lost Mandarin-speaking mainlanders from Taiwan to the Chinese Church of Clear Lake, a mainly Cantonese-speaking and

Mandarin-speaking church. In general, EFC Nasa church members have relative strong Christians faith when compared to the two previous church members the author had served. Most EFC Nasa church member actively practiced daily devotion, faithfully attending Sunday service, and supporting church activities. However, since the previous pastors recruited to help at the beginning of the church founding process have Presbyterian background, the church in general exhibit Presbyterian-influenced practices and rituals. And EFC Nasa has never openly claim to practice the gift of the Holy Spirit, like "Signs and Wonders", but church members are definitely demonstrated spiritual gifts in many area of the church ministries. Generally speaking, due to its conservative nature, EFC Nasa has never actively look for new religious market outside the Taiwanese-speaking community in the City of Clear Lake. EFC Nasa has never experienced the pressure to transforming as that of EFCLA. EFC Nasa basically has maintained its traditions and never intended to reflect individual's preference (such as personal religion and supernatural experiences). At the same time, EFC Nasa was never forced to look for new religious markets outside the Taiwanese-speaking religious market. Thus, in general EFC Nasa continued to maintain its original Presbyterian background and its exclusive Taiwanese language sermon policy⁶⁸ before the author assume the pastoral office. EFC Nasa has not experienced competition in religious market.

⁶⁸ In contrast, at the time when author assumed the pastor office, EFC Nasa has two separate Sunday services: Taiwanese-speaking congregation (with Mandarin translation during sermon) and English-speaking congregation, which consists mainly of high schoolers and some Taiwanese-speaking families. Since the constituents of the English-speaking congregation are high schoolers, the congregation is more of an English outreach ministry than a congregation. But during the past six years there were changes had been implemented to reflect the change of the composition of church members. Since the number of the only Taiwanese-speaking members declined, the Taiwanese-speaking sermon which translated into Mandarin was gradually changed to Mandarin-speaking sermon only. To accommodate the Taiwanese-speaking only members (most are seniors), the same sermon was preached to them earlier in the Sunday school class room.

Religious Practices and Movements. The immigrant Christian church will be influenced by native churches and other immigrant churches in the host society. Some mainline church members may find dissatisfactions with the mainline traditions and practices when they move to new land. Some large scale religious movements like the Evangelical Movement, Charismatic Renewal, Vineyard, and the Third Wave Movement, and the ritual practices associated with them may attract members from the traditional churches. While some of the new experiences and new ritual may challenge the traditional practices, dissatisfied church leaders may be affected. If the cry of change prevails, the church will adapt the new policies and practices.

Chao stated that EFCLA is a Taiwanese immigrant religion and is a Christian church established in the American society. The EFCLA cannot remain unchanged from the influence of American Christian ethos and practices. Chao further argued that the different waves of Taiwanese immigrants brought different social characteristics and social and religious needs to church. Church would be affected by the religious practices and movements which attracted the church members and challenged the church existing practices. Because the second and third waves of immigrants often lacked language ability and surviving skills in the host society, they have been more isolated and have had more problems adjusting to the host society than the earlier student immigrants. Therefore, many new converts are not satisfied with the original forms and practices as a cultural and ethnic symbol based on Taiwanese identity. They prefer religious practices which can relieve their personal problems. The charismatic movement, in promoting traditional religious ideology and emphasizing "Signs and Wonders," meet these newly arrived immigrants' needs (Poloma, 1982:35).

While the development of the EFCLA has been affected in the 1980s by the charismatic movement called the Third Wave Movement, the EFC Nasa had been shielded from the impact of this movement, the ritual and practices of the EFC Nasa has remained as traditional and conservative as any other traditional Presbyterian churches. While EFCLA religious practices and the development of a Mandarin congregation have been influenced by the Third wave Movement, the change of sermon delivery, from the Taiwanese-speaking with Mandarin translation to entire Mandarin-speaking at EFC Nasa had nothing to do the Third Wave Movement. But the change of sermon delivery did attract seekers, interracial marriage couples and Mandarin-speaking mainlanders to attend church service on Sunday. During his service at EFC Nasa, the author have never emphasized on the strategy of “Sign and Wonders” evangelism, nor using the “Sign and Wonders” to convert any seekers; nevertheless, through the emphasis on God’s love and the community relational approach, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, the church leaders and the author have witnessed many wonderful testimonies of conversions.

Environmental Resources: Societal Realm

Pluralization of the Immigrant Population. Immigrant churches rely on the people who emigrated from their homeland. But the number of new immigrants depends on the immigration policy and the socio-economic conditions of the United States. Different background of people came to the United States during the different immigration period. Thus, people who have migrated to the United States from Asian after 1970s differ from their predecessors not only in mentality and aspirations, but also in social backgrounds and modes of adaption (Massey, 1981; Fenton, 1988; Codman-Wilson, 1992; Zhou, 1992). Before the early 1970s, most Asian immigrants came to the United States as

graduate students and professional employees, and a few were family members of the graduate students and professionals. After 1970s, as immigrants become more diverse, such as business people, working class, or their family members, their social and religious needs are different from the earlier homogeneous counterpart. Since the newer immigrants have completed fewer years of schooling than the earlier immigrants, a church must provide substantial aid in their daily life and help them relieve the pressure from their adjustment to the American society. The adjustment of the church program and resources to meet the needs will finally change church's direction. According to Chao's study, "another aspect influencing the pluralization of the immigrant population in the United States is the maturation of the children born in America to the first generation immigrants." The maturation and assimilation of American born children is the primary factor weakens ethnic identity and religious loyalty (Niebuhr, 1957; Mohl & Betten, 1981; Mullins, 1988; Hammond and Warner, 1993). In other words, many American-born generations are attracted to an immigrant church for the religious motive; they are not interested in ethnic issues. Thus, a healthy and growing church tends to develop and adhere to a broader identity practice and shows little interest in the ethnic issues. If the church continues to grow, the original homogeneous membership will be naturally and gradually diluted by the newly recruited heterogeneous population.

In contrast, since the location of the EFC Nasa is in a majority of, white-collar professional suburban neighborhood and is about forty five minute drive from China town where the greater population of Taiwanese and Mainlanders reside, the constituents of the EFC Nasa remained unchanged; they are professionals. In other words, EFC Nasa had not experienced the pluralization of the immigrant population. And, in general, the

social characteristics of the Taiwanese immigrants come to EFC Nasa remain little changed during the church history. Today, all of the head of the household of church members are in the professional career. Even though the third wave immigrants arriving after mid-1980s in Houston represented a different set of social characteristics, they did not move to church vicinity because they were less qualified for the professional works the region provided. The third wave immigrants stayed in China town area where ample working opportunities were available to them. Since the author assumed the pastoral office, there were very few of new converts who were not professionals. Lately, there was one retired Taiwanese working woman who moved into the neighborhood for her cancer treatment and found the EFC Nasa by accident. Another incident, there was a senior widow who appeared at the church door on one Sunday morning and asked to be baptized, later converted to Christianity.

Furthermore, the maturation of the American-born second generation did not promote a pluralization of the Taiwanese population either because the second generation never came back after graduated from college. Therefore, the outreach strategy, which was based on EFC Nasa's ethnic and social characteristics aiming solely at the Taiwanese-speaking group has never been seriously challenged. And since the constituents of the English-speaking second generation Sunday service are high schoolers, English service was never meant to be an independent English congregation, other than an outreach ministry of the Taiwanese congregation. The overall compositions of the EFC Nasa remain homogeneous, socially and culturally. Thus, the pluralization of the immigrant population remains minimal if any.

Interorganizational Relationships. During the early immigration, the immigrant church is one of the most important established ethnic institutions. And in the early immigration period, church enjoys the superior position in the immigrant community. And at the same time, other immigrant organizations like to associate with church and enjoy mutual interests from accessing the network or with individual. As the heterogeneous immigrant population and immigrant organizations increase in the later immigration period, the church loses its superior position in the inter-organizational network. In Andrich's view (1979), personnel and client flows are the most important resources which organizations may benefit from interorganizational relationships. If such relations change, the personnel and flow will be disrupted.

Chao stated, "The EFCLA's 1970s linkage with the Formosan Association, a major Taiwanese social organization, has been its primary interorganizational relationship throughout its twenty-four year history."⁶⁹ the relationship was established based on the common social and cultural goals between these two organizations. At the time, both organizations shared one common agenda: to preserve the Taiwanese ethnic identity and to promote social well-being to the Taiwanese immigrants. Some church leaders are at the same time in charge of the Formosan's Association's key positions. While Formosan association received financial and human resources from EFCLA, EFCLA accessed non-Christian Taiwanese immigrants. But the increase of the diverse Taiwanese immigrants after the mid-1970s and the participation of some radical members in the Formosan Association shook the relation between EFCLA and the Formosan Association. Eventually, EFCLA gradually withdrew its support from the Formosan Association due

⁶⁹ Hsing-Kuang Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow: The Persistence and Transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles*. May 1995. 151.

to the leadership competition within the church. The withdrawal essentially led to the stop of resources flow from EFCLA to the Formosan Association, and the reduction of the opportunities for the EFCLA to access its client pool through Formosan Association. That in turn forced EFCLA to change its outreach strategy, aiming the new target pool based on religious faith and other unique services to attract potential members.

In contrast, even though EFC Nasa has enjoyed close relation with the Clear Lake Taiwanese Association since it was founded, few church members overlapped with the Formosan Association's key leaders, but both organizations enjoyed mutual benefits from the interorganizational relationships. Both organizations remained a clear and polite distance. There were never an incident disrupted the relationships. Many evidences indicated that the EFC Nasa was not a sole source to provide the social and cultural functions to the Taiwanese community and the non-Christian members of Formosan Association. And besides, many of the CLTA members are successful in their professional career, they remained indifferent to the gospel despite the clergy and the church members had intentionally outreached to them. The church attendance and homogeneousness of the church members remained unchanged in the past twenty-two year help confirmed this finding. The transformation of EFC Nasa did not benefit from the interorganizational relationships.

Environmental Resources: Religious Realm

Newly Arrived Christian Immigrants. A study in Asian immigrant churches (Hurh and Kim, 1990) shows that a majority of the early Korean immigrants have had some exposure to Christian missionaries, and many of them have already been baptized

Christians prior to their emigration from Korea.⁷⁰ There are higher percentages of Christians in the new immigrant population than in the homeland population.⁷¹ But since the immigration breaks social tie with homeland family, church, and friends. The new arrivals who have been baptized in homeland Christian church may join a different denomination in the host society. Study shows that the new established immigrant church will attract mass number of homeland baptized Christians in the religious market if they aggressively outreach to these newly arrived immigrant Christians by individual care and network ties. Therefore, the newly arrived Christians, the American-born Christians, and the converted Christians need to accommodate to a style that can be accepted by three subgroups.

The EFCLA consisted of various denominational backgrounds Christians, including Presbyterian, Baptist, and Newly converted members. And to encourage other denomination Christians to join the EFCLA, the Deacon Board adopted a double membership system in the mid-1970s, which allowed new members to join the EFCLA without transferring their original membership from homeland. According to Chao's study, "these transfer members tend to favor the persistence of the exclusive Taiwanese-speaking membership policy and traditional Presbyterian mainline practices. And even these transfer members from the PCT background have experienced 'Sign and Wonders' after joining the EFCLA and hold a pragmatic attitude toward practices of the gift of the Holy Spirit, they have difficulty adjusting to the new worship ritual, especially to the signing of worship music and use of body movements like handclapping, raised arms,

⁷⁰ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 30.

⁷¹ This may not be the case for the immigrants come from Mainland China because during the Cultural Revolution, China had wiped out all religions inside China. Lately, after the open door policy, many traditional religions have thrived under certain conditions from the communist government.

and other emotional expressions during the Sunday services.”⁷² Finally, an acute conflict erupted between the PCT background transfer members and clergy. The different preferences for religious practices between the transfer members and those who open themselves to the American religious influence have become a major hurdle preventing the EFCLA from being transformed to a charismatic style church.⁷³

In contrast, since most of the church members are the first generation Christians, EFC Nasa had not experienced the impact from transfer members. But because of the lack of the previous church experience, EFC Nasa adopted without difficulty to whatever the pastor suggested. As a result, EFC Nasa has been very conservative with the worship style and remained indifferent to any charismatic gestures. The location of the church further shields any possible influence from any other Taiwanese church in Houston. By the time the author assumed the pastoral office, there has been a three-year lapse of pastoral care. But there were modern praise and worship songs sung in the Sunday service but lack of live and jubilee of sincere worshiper. The recent change of the combined service of English and Taiwanese has brought new life to Sunday service, not because of the any introduction of the praise and worship songs or the skills of playing the instruments, but because of the work of the Holy Spirit and the genuine participants, old and young. The inevitable demise of the high school English ministry might have served as a wake-up call to the church leaders. But the real thrust behind this process was the urge of the Holy Spirit which had awaken some of the church families who were not from Taiwan and had remained indifferent to any church services before.

⁷² Hsing-Kuang Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow: The Persistence and Transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles*. May 1995. 160.

⁷³ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 162.

Miraculously, they responded to the divine call. Their contagious spirit from the Holy Spirit have stirred up and rekindled the dimming fire among the long-time church members. There are no newly arrived Christian immigrants transformed the EFC Nasa, but the newly awakening of the old Christians who have experienced the transformation of the Holy Spirit transformed the church.

Resources in other Christian Organizations. Religious organizations are communities and they can support each other by sharing their ideological commitments as well as other resources (Davidaon, 1985:23-34). New religious practices and theological principles which proved to be helpful to promote church growth are introduced and share with other like-minded churches or institutions through supporting networks. That outside resources can be utilized to foster change if deemed necessary.

According to the senior pastor of EFCLA Rev. Liu, the EFCLA underwent its new feature in worship ritual, the work of the Holy Spirit, and cross cultural (language) ministry after he took a course, "MC510 Signs, Wonders and Church Growth," at Fuller Seminary and after he and other church leaders participated in a worship conference offered by the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in 1984.⁷⁴ The change of religious practices, including the worship ritual and the pursuit of the gift of the Holy Spirit, received a very good response from many church members, especially from those who were new immigrants.⁷⁵ The transformation of religious practice and attitudes toward the cross cultural (language) ministry of the EFCLA was strongly influenced by the school of world Mission at Fuller seminary and Vineyard Christian Fellowship.

⁷⁴ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 162.

⁷⁵ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 164.

In contrast, the leaders of the EFC Nasa has never imposed any particular “power evangelism” teachings to its members, nor subscribed to any ethos promoted by any other Christian organization, such as Vineyard Christian Fellowship. And even though had served in Four Square church for more than a decade, the author of this thesis had no preference of any particular ethos of worship nor subscribed to any wave of movement in ministry. However, the young English-speaking second generation high schoolers and the returned college graduates who were brought up in American culture; they are more open to wave of postmodern rituals and have been exposed to variety of the modern praise and worship formality, they are more sensitive to the current cultural trend than their parents.

Organizational Dynamic Factors

Even the explanation of the transformation of an organization can be attributed to persistence or to a change in environmental resources, it is the internal components that respond to the pressure from the external environment and that mobilize the proper resource toward a change (Lawrence, 1985:51).⁷⁶ Any particular organization’s structure and goals are the reflection of the founding members’ social conditions, experience and expectations. So the persistence and transformation of this organization after formation are the result of interactions of between external and internal pressure in the field over time (Hall, 1987:121).⁷⁷ If structural conditions are changed and environmental resources are decreased, the organization will need to take actions toward the new environment, or it will decline (Aldrich, 1979:186).⁷⁸ In order for the organization to prosper, it needs to adopt strategies to transform from the old forms and mobilize its available resources from the new environment. The following are the organizational dynamics that promote the

⁷⁶ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 33.

⁷⁷ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 33.

⁷⁸ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 33.

changes: heterogeneous memberships, leadership, organizational structure, and Ideology and Theological Perspective.

Heterogeneous Memberships. The challenge of the new immigrant church to prosper is to retain its original members, attract members from the new generations and to recruit new members from the community. And “success in these areas result not only in the diversity of the membership, but it also promotes resource competition among member subgroups that bring various social backgrounds and interests to the church.”⁷⁹

As a result, the competition of church resources among different interest subgroups will lead to either a transformation of the church’s original form or maintenance of the status quo (Zald and Ash, 1966:523-525). In addition, through intermarriage and other interactions with other ethnic groups, the American-born generations bring to the immigrant church people, ideas, and knowledge that affect the future development. Heterogeneous membership is more likely to transform than the one which has a more homogeneous membership.

According to Chao’s findings, the EFCLA’s membership grew from 43 in 1970 to 350 in 1993, and the average Sunday service attendance increased from 66 people in 1970 to 550 people in 1993. The members’ average age was 35 and 80 percent were college graduates. Most members, except for some housewives and elderly retirees, were students or professionals. Most of the American-born second generation members were under 10 years old. All members were Taiwanese-speaking Taiwanese. In the early 1990s, church statistics showed change in its membership constituency. Students and professionals members no longer held their majority.

⁷⁹ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 34.

Many church members were small business people, self-employed, and white collar workers. Many new members recruited after the establishment of EFCLA were not student immigrants; in contrast, they had immigrated to the United States because of political or economic reasons. Many American-born second generation members were in their twenties. Some members were from other ethnic and language groups. The major languages used in the EFCLA were Taiwanese, English, and Mandarin.

Later, in 1981 when the second generation teenagers numbered about 30 people, the English Sunday service was finally established. In 1988 when about 100 participants attended the English Sunday service, the EFCLA's Board of Elders installed the "Junior Deacons", thus the English congregation was established. The formation of the English-speaking congregation was more of an "inner biological effect."⁸⁰ It is quite different from the increase in the Mandarin-speaking members and the establishment of the Mandarin congregation in the EFCLA. For the English-speaking members, afraid of losing their children from the church, the older generation accepted the difference between themselves and their children.

However, the Mandarin-speaking members were newcomers from the greater Chinese community and the EFCLA did not intend and were not prepared to recruit these people into the church during her earlier development stage. But later, due to the increase of bilingual (Taiwanese and Mandarin) young adult student participants from Taiwan led the EFCLA to establish her Mandarin-speaking fellowship group in 1977 and the success of a Mandarin-speaking fellowship group in 1984 (YFST, young foreign students from Taiwan) produced a true Mandarin-speaking subgroup in the EFCLA. And also later, in addition to the YFST fellowship group members from Taiwan and other bilingual

⁸⁰ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 171.

students from Taiwan, a few Mandarin-speaking Chinese participated in the EFCLA through the members' social network ties in the late 1980s help motivated the EFCLA toward developing of a Mandarin ministry.

The availability of Mandarin-speaking leaders provided another important resource helped the establishment of a Mandarin congregation. In 1991, a proposal of establishing a Mandarin-speaking congregation was raised and discussed by the church council but was not accepted until another council meeting in 1992. The members in the English and the Mandarin congregations of the EFCLA were different from members in the Taiwanese congregation in terms of spoken language, age, social status, and religious expression. According to Chao's study, the English and the Mandarin congregations were subjected to the influence of The Third Wave Movement; the English congregation was strongly influenced by the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, especially in worship style, music and training program. And Chao suggested the development of the EFCLA's English congregation will set an example for other EFC's congregations in Southern California.⁸¹ The Mandarin congregation is less influenced by the Vineyard Fellowship than the English congregation.

EFC Nasa, in contrast, due to its location in the South East suburb of Houston, where the constituents of the church are earlier Taiwanese oversea students turned professionals after graduated from graduate school. The composition of the church members is relatively homogeneous, in term of age, education, and social background. Two of the four church founding families still live within three-mile from church. Every

⁸¹ Unfortunately, the majority members of the EFCLA's English congregation once clung to Vineyard Fellowship's ethos of worship had left EFCLA later. The causes of the departure are not our concern in this study. As of today, the EFCLA English congregation worship style is more or less like any other Evangelical churches in America, dynamic and passion.

church member lives within a local drive of six-mile radius from church. The committed Christians/families remain stable since the church was founded, give or take; there are about fifteen dedicated families in any time during the church twenty three years of history. EFC Nasa was founded 1988, about eighteen years later than that of EFCLA. The formation and the development of the EFC Nasa resembled in many ways as that of the EFCLA. The only but major difference between these two is that EFC Nasa has never experienced any significant pressure to change. Even though there were few Mandarin-speaking members and intermarriage couples joined the church but the critical mass has never been reached to have any impact. And since the majority of the church members are the first generation Christians and moreover, the geographical location of the church shields itself from any other Taiwanese churches' influence, the members are insensitive and indifferent to either the Third Wave Movement or the Vineyard Fellowship group. To make the situation worse, none of the second generation English speaking offspring ever came back after graduated from university until 2010, and the number of the English-speaking group is diminishing. Further, since the first generation still clings to its uniqueness of Taiwanese tradition and culture that further deter any heterogeneous members from joining the church hence the church receives little impact if any from any heterogeneous members. As the author mentioned earlier, the challenge of the new immigrant church to prosper is to retain its original members, attract members from the new generations and to recruit new members from the community. It is a challenge for a small church like the EFC Nasa to continue to grow through heterogeneous memberships.

Leadership. In every aspect of an organization's resources, leadership is the most influential in determining an organization's direction; the resources are in the hand of the leaders of the organization. Since their early immigration period, many immigrant churches have been founded and dominated by the lay leaders. These churches were autonomous bodies and could closely reflect the needs and aspirations of their members (Mohl & Betten, 1981:3).⁸² These lay-dominated immigrant churches have been created as dynamic and flexible religious institutions that can adjust to the new land (Smith, 1978). According to Chao, in other words, these lay-dominated immigrant churches are more likely to be transformed than clergy dominated churches.⁸³ Because if the needs of their members change, the new pragmatic lay leadership will replace the original leadership. The new lay leadership will reflect the more diverse needs of different member subgroups and encourage church transformation (Zurchur and Snow, 1992:465).

The time and money that the lay leaders devote to the church operation will determine the extent the lay leadership influences. The middle-class professionals are the most available members of lay leadership in most native America churches as well as in most immigrant churches (MaCarthy and Zald, 1973:8). But if the church has continued to grow and institutionalize, the role of lay leadership will be replaced, at least partially, by professional clergy members.⁸⁴ Clergy with professional knowledge and skills are most sensitive to the change of environment and members' needs. They are also in a position to cultivate new ideas for new directions on behalf of church's long-term development (Davidson, 1985:21). And the initiation of change is based on the relative

⁸² Hsing-Kuang Chao, "Mobilizing to Grow: The Persistence and Transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles" (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1995), 35.

⁸³ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 35.

⁸⁴ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 36.

strength of the leader's identification with their ideology and position, especially among the professional leaders (Aldrich, 1979:217). Pastoral leadership who is devoted to full time to church affairs and committed to future goals rather than to present operation will be more inclined to initiate a transformation in the church when structural conduciveness and environment resources are not conducive to the persistence of the original church's forms. Therefore, church leaders will initiate a transformation of the church in response to the changing environment as they attempt to promote the church's future development (Khalsa, 1986:245).

EFC movement distinct itself from the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan: the lay leader is in charge of the Moderator office of the entire EFC, not the clergy. Since the day one, the lay leaders have been actively involved in the strategic planning and the church direction. Clergy was invited to fulfill the pastoral functions and to assume the leader position of the spiritual affairs of the church (Acts 6:4). EFCLA has benefited greatly from its members' North America highly qualiy, educated human resources. The majority of the EFC lay leaders is mature, intelligent, voluntary, and dedicated Christian. They are elected to assume proper position and to perform their duties for the benefits of the church members.

Without going into details, in summary, during the formation period, the EFCLA's lay leaders were elected to reflect religious and social characteristics of the church. In the early 1970s, all of the lay leaders were student immigrants and professionals. And because more than half of the founding leaders and members were from PCT background, the EFCLA performed a traditional style of religious ritual during the formation period, and adopted religious materials from the PCT, including a

Taiwanese Bible and the PCT's hymn book. The key leadership was dominated by the first generation founding core members until the early 1990s. In 1990 and 1991, second and third generation leaders became church deacons; the Mandarin ministry was finally accepted by the church Council and the Board of Elders.

Because the EFCLA was established as a lay dominated Taiwanese ethnic church in the United States, the church leaders expected that the new pastor could cooperate with them in both socio-political and church administration preferences. According to scholars, the leader of an immigrant church like the EFCLA who want to pursue changes must have three qualities: dedication, vision (a sense of direction), and knowledge and experience (Davidson, 1985; Nadler and Tushman, 1989).⁸⁵

Pastoral leadership was one of the most crucial dynamics that fostered the transformation of the EFCLA. For the details of Rev. Liu's leadership during his pastorate at EFCLA, reader can refer to Chao's study (p xx), or can be summarized as following: 1) Life-time dedication of winning souls for Christ. 2) Leadership training, Christian discipleship, and cell groups for lay leaders. 3) The priority of evangelical mandate over cultural mandates. 4) Remain open-minded to the new evangelistic ethos and strategies. 5) Persistent in church growth. 6) Extensive experience and personal skills, including once served as a chaplain at a Christian university and gained a doctoral degree in missiology at Fuller Seminary. 7) Personal networks. Through networks built at Fuller Theological Seminary, some of professors at FTS have become Liu's counselors in church growth and other religious practices.

EFC Nasa has gone through the similar struggle as that the EFCLA had experienced. When the author assumed the pastoral office at EFC Nasa, he had noticed

⁸⁵ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 186.

the flow of immigrants from Mainland China coming to the Clear Lake area. But since the EFC Nasa did not have enough of Taiwanese-Chinese marriage couples to outreach to them. And the proposal to outreach to the new immigrants was not well received by the church council. In addition, the church financial was very healthy and strong, thus the leadership of the EFC Nasa did not feel the need or feel any pressure to open church door to the new Chinese immigrants. Hence, the pastor's insistence of exercising the evangelical mandate over cultural mandates found no immediate ground. However, lately, the church leadership did sense the steady decline and the character change of the constituents of the church membership in the last five years. So the proposal of Mandarin-speaking sermon delivery was gradually received by church council and finally was implemented to accommodate this change.

According to the sociological theory the author just mentioned above, the lay-dominated immigrant churches have been created as dynamic and flexible religious institutions that can adjust to the new land (Smith, 1978). And these lay-dominated immigrant churches are more likely to be transformed than clergy dominated churches. But, quite opposite, when a lay-dominated church feels no pressure to be transformed, without the help from lay leaders the clergy would be too weak and too ineffective to do any meaningful ministry.

When compared to the qualifications of Rev. Liu, the author of this thesis has far less experience and skills, nor sufficient network connections from other church leaders, but the author believed that a small church has its advantages over a larger church. If properly equipped with the small group dynamic courses geared toward outreach, the small church tend to do quite well, especially good for one-on-one evangelism. So since

the author took the pastor office, the church had gone through different evangelism training courses, such as, Alpha, Evangelism Explosion courses.

One outstanding trait worthy of notice, however, since the church leadership sensed the steady decline of membership, EFC Nasa's outreach team members have started relentlessly putting their effort and exploring their network connections to outreaching these new immigrants from China by inviting them to Women small/fellowship group. And in most cases, the new immigrants from China were willing to participate in the small group context (participants speak in Mandarin and the average age is lower) but were reluctant to join Sunday worship service (sermon delivered in English with translation in Mandarin, but the average age of the attendants is higher). The author suspected the reluctance of the Mandarin speaking Chinese coming to Sunday service is more of culture issue than the language issue. Interesting to note, the transformation of EFC Nasa is not caused by the great inflow of new immigrants but caused by the decline of church membership which in turn help awaken church leadership to accommodate this change.

Worth to note, the leadership of EFC Nasa has gradually reached consensus of accommodation to the change and challenges the church is facing. And the author of this thesis has benefited greatly from the studying in the Gordon-Conwell Theological seminary Doctor of Ministry *Ministry to Postmodern Generation* cohort program which opened the possible venues for the author to venture in the past three and half years. Exposure to these trainings the author has gained confident in dealing with postmodern cultural issues permeated within church which more than often deter outreach/evangelism from effectively executed.

Organizational Structure. According to Zald and Ash (1966), the two organizational structure factors that impact the persistence and transformation of an immigrant church are (1) the origin of the church and (2) the inclusive or exclusive memberships and leaders. Organizations not established by a parent organization or not supported by other organizations are likely to take on new goals.⁸⁶ Zurcher and Curtis' study (1973) suggests that an organization without its own member recruiting and stable fund-raising base and that is dependent upon a parent organization has difficulty in transforming itself. In other words, lay-established independent churches are more likely to change than are the churches developed by and affiliated with a denomination.⁸⁷ And studies (Zurcher and Curtis, 1973; Curtis and Zurcher, 1974; Schutt, 1986) have shown that the nature of membership and leadership recruitment and requirements (exclusive or inclusive organizations) influences an organization's performance and development. The more exclusive membership and leadership orientation will require members and leaders to pledge more of their time for organizational task and so will maintain the integrity of the organizational boundaries.⁸⁸ Therefore, the organizations with more exclusive orientations may encounter more resistance to transformation from their members and leaders (Zurcher & Curtis, 1973:178).

The EFCLA's "non-denomination independent church background and recruitment requirements for members and lay leaders have played significant roles in the church's process of adaptation to the change environment."⁸⁹ According to Chao, there were two factors that promoted the EFCLA to remain as a non-denominational

⁸⁶ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 37.

⁸⁷ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 37.

⁸⁸ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 38.

⁸⁹ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 192.

independent church. First, many founding members were young professionals and were financial well off. Second, because of the founding members' different denominational backgrounds and some were new converts in EFC, only the non-denominational structure could be accepted by all founding members.

As for the EFC Nasa, the author echoed the suggestion from Zurcher and Curtis' study (1973) which suggests that an organization without its own member recruiting and stable fund-raising base and that is dependent upon a parent organization has difficulty in transforming itself. However, the EFC Nasa has experienced very little membership fluctuations during its twenty three years of history. And in generally, the employment of the church members was very stable and their financial were relative well off. And most of the new converts and the heterogeneous members who tended to stay in the EFC Nasa for a shorter period of time when compared with the majority of the members who settled in the Clear Lake area. The relative financial well off of the EFC Nasa certainly has relieved its pressure from aggressively recruiting new believers.

EFC Nasa shares many commonalities with EFCLA. The EFC Nasa has a mix of exclusive lay leadership and inclusive membership requirements. Although members are encouraged to commit to daily devotion, tithing and participation in a small group, these functions are not requirements for membership. Baptized Christians from all Christian denominations, except for sects like the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, can apply for membership in the EFC Nasa. New converts baptized in the EFC Nasa will automatically receive membership. The inclusive membership requirement may have contributed to the membership growth since the EFCLA was established in 1970, but the EFC Nasa benefited little if any from the inclusive membership. And while the conflict caused by

the heterogeneous membership in terms of the inclusive membership has become a major dynamic that transformed the EFCLA,⁹⁰ the EFC Nasa has experienced no conflict from the heterogeneous members at all, if they ever stayed long enough in church.

The first generation leaders strongly insisted that the EFCLA should be a Taiwanese-speaking church and the church should not serve other language speaking populations. Imagined had those individuals still serving in 1992, the Mandarin congregation would never have been formed. But because of the inclusive membership requirement brought the heterogeneous members into the EFCLA, the younger generation leaders have reflected their needs. And the homogeneous leadership was finally replaced by a more heterogeneous leadership which reflects the needs of the heterogeneous membership in church. The inclusive membership requirement and the heterogeneous leadership help transformed the EFCLA. On the other hand, EFC Nasa did not benefit any form this policy until one heterogeneous member⁹¹ joined the church council two years ago. And since his participation in the church council, his actively involvement in several church ministries eventually help transformed the EFC Nasa. Saturday morning ministry was one of the ministries based on his idea. The ministry was designed for church brothers who are busy in work during weekdays can come to meet 8:00-9:00 in the morning for one-hour reading/sharing/praying/devotion. This ministry help revived the weary spirits of church brothers.

Ideology and Theological Perspective. The ideology and theological perspectives are the most significant dynamics in symbolic form held by the religious organizations. In

⁹⁰ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 196.

⁹¹ The heterogeneous family has been with the church before the author joined the church in August, 2004. But the family has never actively involved in any ministries, partially due to the uncertainty of his work visa, and partially due to his relative larger family, four young children to attend to.

most cases, the ideology and theological perspectives dictate individuals' enthusiasm and emotion, promoting an organization to move in certain direction without a consideration of the cost and the benefits. Therefore, a church's opportunities for the mobilization of other resources toward its new end will be jeopardized without the theological and ideological justification (Zurcher and Snow, 1992:170).

The EFCLA adopted the Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP), a concept advocated by Professor Donald McGarvan at the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, explained church growth in multi-ethnic and non-Christian background communities (McGarvan, 1970); the principle was adopted to justify the exclusive Taiwanese-speaking mission and to encourage members' involvement in the evangelism to the Taiwanese. Based on McGarvan's mission experience in India, the Homogeneous Unit Principle claims that churches should evangelize to people of the same ethnic, language, and cultural background for better church growth.⁹² But the Homogeneous Unit Principle was later reinterpreted by Rev. Liu as homogeneous sub-groups within a local church in the mid-1980s. He indicated the EFCLA would consider a Spanish ministry if a Spanish minister could be found to join the EFCLA. In light of this re-interpretation, a new concept, the Spirit of the EFC, has been developed to justify and guide the development of the new multilingual ministry since the end of 1980s. The Spirit of the EFC emphasizes that the most important tradition of the church is evangelism. The Taiwanese language should not be considered as the most significant symbol of the EFCLA and other EFC's congregations.⁹³ The development of the Spirit of

⁹² Hsing-Kuang Chao, "Mobilizing to Grow: The Persistence and Transformation of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Los Angeles" (Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1995), 200.

⁹³ Chao, *Mobilizing to Grow*, 202.

EFC and the re-interpretation of the Homogeneous Unit Principle were influenced by environmental change and church development within and without church.

In contrast, EFC Nasa has adapted to accept the Mandarin-speaking sermon delivery with Taiwanese translation on Sunday since the author took the pastor office. And gradually the Taiwanese translation was eventually abandoned to accommodate the need from the congregation. As of today, EFC Nasa has one combined Sunday service in order to conserve the resource, the Sunday sermon is delivered in English and translated in Mandarin to reflect the needs of the congregation. For those who are only familiar with Taiwanese language, the Sunday sermon will be concisely summarized by one co-worker and briefly be delivered to the seniors in the seniors Sunday school on Sunday morning. The HUP was very important for the EFC Nasa since the church was founded until the author of this thesis assumed the pastoral office. The HUP does not fit the current EFC Nasa church context any longer. It was unofficially adapted in the first place, and was unofficial abandoned by the acceptance of heterogeneous members into church membership. The comparisons between the EFCLA and the EFC Nasa with the consideration of Chao's model are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 The Comparisons between the EFCLA and the EFC Nasa with the Consideration of Chao's model

FACTORS EXPECTED TO AFFECT THE PERSISTENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF NEW IMMIGRANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH	EFCLA	EFC Nasa
STRUCTURAL CONDUCIVENESS		
A.- Societal Realm:		
DISCREDITATION OF MONOPOLISTIC SERVICES	Y	Y
Other social and religious organizations in the area.	Y	Y
Continued flow of immigrants to the vicinity of church ⁹⁴	Y	N
The return of college-bound high school graduates ⁹⁵	N	N
The withdrawal of social and cultural services	Y	N
English and Mandarin languages implementation	Y	Y
TRANSFORMATION		
PAST EXPERIENCES AND ETHNIC RELATIONS	Y	Y
Relation improved between two groups	Y	Y
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
B.- Religious Realm:		
COMPETITION IN RELIGIOUS MARKET	Y	N
Actions taken in response to the competition in Religious Market	Y	N
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND MOVEMENTS	Y	N
Church promote the Third Wave Movement emphasis on "Signs and Wonders"	Y	N
Development of the Mandarin-speaking congregation induced by the Third Wave Movement	Y	N
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES		
A.- Societal Realm:		
PLURALIZATION OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION	Y	N
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS	Y	Y
New outreach strategy	Y	N
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N

⁹⁴ Due to the decline NASA budget and worsen economic conditions, the professional employment opportunities; the major constituent of the church members, are diminishing. Even though the immigrants from Taiwan has been declined in recent years in Los Angeles area, due to the church location, the threat of diminished Taiwanese-speaking congregation is far less in Los Angeles than in Webster/John Space Center vicinity.

⁹⁵ In Chao's study, the return of the college-bound church adult children was not considered, whereas, in EFC Nasa, none of the college-bound church adults even returned until 2010, unexpectedly, three adult children return for employment. Whereas, since its advantage of church location, EFCLA can enjoy better member transfer and replenished from elsewhere.

Table 4 The Comparisons between the EFCLA and the EFC Nasa with the Consideration of Chao's model (cont.)

B.- Religious Realm:		
NEWLY ARRIVED CHRISTIAN IMMIGRANTS	Y	Y
The adoption of new worship ritual to accommodate new converted Christians	Y	N
become a charismatic style of church	N	N
Become Christian due to the outreach by individual care and network ties	Y	Y
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
RESOURCES IN OTHER CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS	Y	N
The introduction of "Power Evangelism"	Y	N
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS FACTORS		
HETEROGENEOUS MEMBERSHIPS	Y	N
Rapid church members grow	Y	N
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
LEADERSHIP	Y	N
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE	Y	Y
Heterogeneous Leadership	Y	Y
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N
IDEOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE	Y	Y
TRANSFORMATION	Y	N

Sociological Approach Summary

The table showed, in sum, two factors are very important parts in the church growth for the immigrant churches, like the EFCLA and the EFC Nasa. The first is the number of the church membership; and the second is the church leadership, clergy and lay-leaders. Without tapping to a local large pool of immigrants, the immigrant church will not continue to grow. And the inclusive membership requirement ensures continued flow of the heterogeneous members to church which in turn changes the composition of the church and help transforms the church to reflect the needs of different sub-groups in the church. For the immigrant church, employing multi-languages is inevitable. But in order to sustain the growth in the foreign land, adapting to the language of the immigrating country is essential.

In the EFCLA case, the church's commitment to growth shaped the church into a church with heterogeneous membership. This development was driven not only by the maturation of the American-born second generation offspring and the increase in Mandarin-speaking members, but also driven by the large number of young and newly converted members. Scholars seemed to agree that the "Critical Mass" of membership makes a big impact in church growth and help shape church's direction and allocate its resources. When renewal is used to make up for an inadequate reproduction potential there is no guarantee that a church will be turned from decline to growth. In addition to having renewal it must also be of a sufficient size, and have sufficient enthusiasts, to tip into growth. For given reproduction and renewal potentials, there a critical mass of believers, and enthusiasts, needed for growth to occur.

Figure 1 shows the critical mass for enthusiasts in a church. The lower three curves have the initial number of enthusiasts under the critical mass of enthusiasts. The upper three the initial value is above. Clearly only those with a sufficient number of enthusiasts to start with see the growth; a similar effect occurs in the number of believers in the church.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Author unknown. Homepage of church growth modeling, accessed 30 March 2010; available from <http://www.churchmodel.org.uk/RenewalResult.html>.

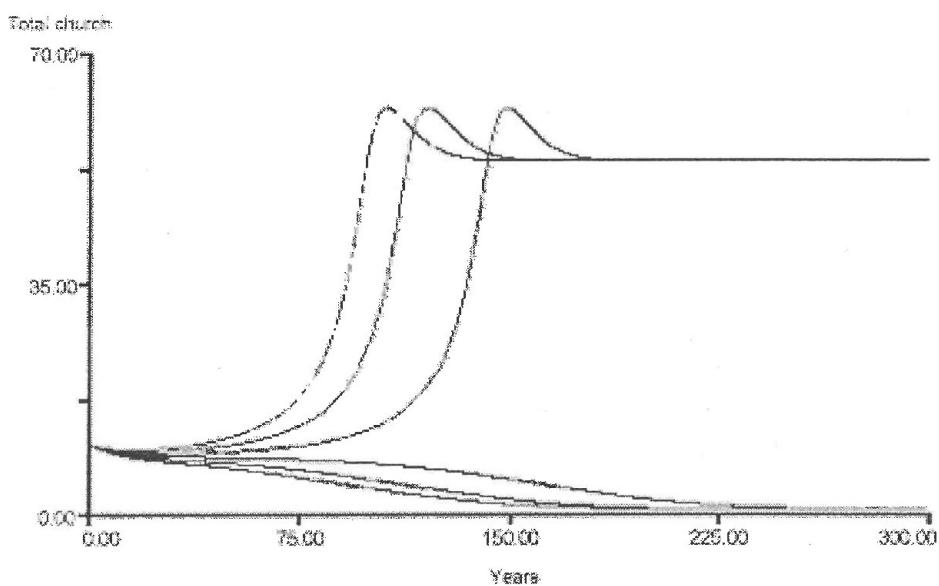


Figure 1 The Critical Mass for Enthusiasts in A Church.

Thus renewal is more effective if enthusiasts are concentrated together in one place. Likewise renewal is more effective in larger churches, although this must be balanced against possible increased opposition - not included in the renewal model. Again, for a small change in the number enthusiasts, just taking it above the critical mass, there is a huge change in outcome in the church.

Suffice it to say, but in regard to the aspect of the church growth, membership represents only one sector of the church growth. The Church growth includes not only growth in quantity (solid number), but also grow in quality (abstract character). Since the majority of the church membership size in America is under 100. And the majority of EFC church membership size in the U. S. A. is under 100. If the only concern for church leaders is sheer number, the burden to grow church from small to large would be tremendous and unrealistic. However, if the emphasis is on the church health as Christ's

witness rather than on church membership, then there are still ample opportunities and possibilities that church can do in its unique context.

From the findings of this case study, it revealed that the leadership of a church is crucial in every aspects of church ministry. EFC Nasa has done well if not better when compared its location and resources to that of the EFCLA. Lastly, even though Dr. Chao's model is mainly for the church growth, his study not only help clarify what are the challenges the EFC Nasa is facing, but also identify the possible transformative potential that the EFC Nasa has in the future. The EFC Nasa displayed itself as vibrant Christian witness by demonstrating its loving relationship with the community through the aid of the Holy Spirit.

Theoretical Approach

Contextualization

Chinese culture has been greatly shaped by the western influence. It is evidenced by so many elements, such as food, daily usage foreign origin vocabulary, and scientific technologies. Especially the influence from technology is beyond individual level. As Dr. Wan put it, "it is institutionalized collectively and internalized personally."⁹⁷ Various dimensions of contemporary Chinese culture have been westernized which include at least following aspects: science and technology, military and weaponry, politics and ideology, education, sports and social science, language and writing, and Christianity. History tells us that the Nestorian version of Christianity was brought to China by missionaries as early as *T'ang* dynasty. Yet, the acceptance of Christianity by Chinese has never reached its blossom if ever flourished in the past. It was not until the repeated

⁹⁷ Enoch Wan, "Christianity in the East and the West." *Journal of Chinese around the World*, Article I. September 2005, 2.

military defeats by Western nations and the humiliation of unequal treaties signed by the *Ch'ing* government, Christian missionaries came along with the gun-boat policy of the West. The historical humiliation helps shed light on the two questions: 1) Why the Chinese traditionally is hostile toward Western missionaries and why they resist so called the western import “Christianity”? 2) How extensive and how comprehensive were the Western influences on the Chinese Christian church institutionally and the expression of Christian faith theologically?⁹⁸ The first question is understandable and the answer to which is easy to comprehend. But the latter question is not so obvious unless we ever had a one-on-one evangelism experience with any typical Chinese, and the answer to it is what this section all about.

How do the traditional Chinese perceive “Westernization”⁹⁹ Christianity? Or what signs of the westernized Christianity do Chinese see? Dr. Wan categorized his answers in the following five aspects¹⁰⁰: 1) Importation and Impression: transported by Gun-boat and expanded under unequal treaties. The important and the increase of missionary resources tied with gun-boat policy and colonial expansion of the Western powers. 2) Form and format: garbed and groomed in western manner. Many foreign missionaries and Chinese converts took advantage of the trend of Westernization and exploited the circumstances of Western dominations in China for the sake of Christian proselytization and missionary expansion without cultural sensitivity and missiological contextualization. 3) Methodology: served on western plate. Chinese perceived Christianity to be a Western religion, in contra-distinction to the indigenous

⁹⁸ Wan, “Christianity in the East and the West,” article I, 5.

⁹⁹ “Westernization” can be understood as “the process/product of the influence/import of Western culture on Chinese”

¹⁰⁰ Enoch Wan, “Christianity in the East and the West,” article II, 3.

Confucianism, Taoism, “sinocized Buddhism”, folk religion, etc. it is not a simple matter for a traditional Chinese to become a Christian and whoever does would be consider a “cultural traitor”, henceforth the saying, “one more Christian conversion; one Chinese less in population”. 4) Operation: seasoned with Western flavor. Western missionaries who brought Christianity to China also took with them the practice of internal conflicts among factions of Christian groups. 5) Meaning: transplanted in Western Pot. There were nine articles on “contextual/indigenous church” in the “Church Declaration” that was drafted at the “National Christian Council of China” meeting, held in May 1922 in Shanghai attended by 1,180 representatives including both Chinese and foreign missionaries. The main thrust was negatively calling for the correction of the fact that Christianity was too westernized and positively calling for culturally contextualized Christianity. In other words, both Chinese delegates and Western missionary representatives agreed that Christianity should not be transplanted to China in a Western pot: it should be transplanted and rooted in Chinese soil. In the eye of traditional Chinese, Christianity is what imported and imposed from the West. The resentment is deeply harbored in the heart of patriotic Chinese.

In other words, one of the reasons why in the past two hundred years the “Westernized” Christianity had not worked quite well to those non-Christian traditional Chinese was just discovered. Bible Acts 15 reminds us what a tragedy will be when the Jewish Christians of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15) who imposed their Jewish cultural traditional on the new gentile converts, making cultural assimilation a prerequisite to spiritual conversion and maturation. Dr. Wan proposed that “the ways and means that Christianity is to be preached in a culturally sensitive and contemporarily relevant

manner to the Chinese in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, etc. is imperative.” And it will be a challenge to Chinese Christian researchers and scholars to employ evangelistic methodology, develop church polity, explore worship style, cultivate musical and literary expression, formulate contextual theology, etc. that are biblically valid and culturally relevant.”¹⁰¹

In his critiquing to the method of Traditional Western Theology (TWT) and calling for Sino-theology, Dr. Wan believed “Theology is foundational to Christian faith and practice; just as the worldview of a certain cultural tradition is foundational to group members’ belief and practice. Therefore, “Contextualized Chinese theology” (i.e. “Sino-theology” or “ST”) is essential to further discussion on practical contextualization.”¹⁰²

When Christianity came to China couple hundred years ago, some Chinese Christians might have blindly accepted some western cultural elements (both the good and the bad) in the process of theologizing when receiving the sound Christian doctrine from Western theological tradition. And “theologizing is a matter of conceptualization closely related to cultural conditioning. Perception of reality and conception of spirituality cannot be separated from the enculturation process of members of a cultural group.”¹⁰³ Thus, contextualization and theologizing of the gospel to Chinese is crucial to its taking root, flourishing, and finally bearing fruits in the Chinese land.

The evangelizing of the gospel in Taiwan in the past two hundred years may serve as another example. Taiwan is an island and was once ruled under Portugese, Spanish, Japanese, *Ch'in* dynasty of China, and currently the Republic of China. And the gospel was first introduced to Taiwanese by the Presbyterian Church of Canada. But the

¹⁰¹ Wan, “Christianity in the East and the West,” article II, 5.

¹⁰² Lee, *Thesis Project*, 6.

¹⁰³ Wan, “Christianity in the East and the West,” article I, 5.

Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has never thrived in the past two hundred years and the total Christian population has remained three percent shy of the population of Taiwan. Taiwan has long been perceived by missionaries as a little evangelizing, hard missionary field. One of the reasons that results in the low evangelizing rate of Taiwanese may be that the contextualization and theologizing of the gospel to Chinese in Taiwan has yet taken its root.

Dr. Wan believed that the seed of TWT might have been mistakenly planted by missionaries and blinded received by earlier believers in Taiwan. His critiquing to TWT can be categorized in several perspectives: cognitive pattern (“both-and” vs. “either-or”), cognitive process (synthetic vs. the dialectic), social interaction (relational/complementary vs. dichotomist/confrontational), and cultural themes (group solidarity such as family vs. self-fulfillment). See Table 5 Comparison of ST and TWT.

Table 5 Comparison of Perspective between ST and TWT

	COGNITIVE PATTERN	COGNITIVE PROCESS	SOCIAL INTERACTION	CULTURAL THEMES
TWT	EITHER/OR	DIALECTIC	DICHOTOMIST/CONFRONTATIONAL	SELF-FULFILLMENT
ST	BOTH/AND	SYNTHETIC	RELATIONAL/COMPLEMENTARY	FAMILY

The author has no intention to explore the comparison between ST and TWT in great details but only using the cognitive pattern and cognitive process as illustration to make a point. In regarding to cognitive pattern, according to one social orientation hypothesis, “A large body of research documents cognitive differences between Westerners and East Asians. Westerners tend to be more analytic and East Asians tend to

be more holistic. These findings have often been explained as being due to corresponding differences in social orientation. Westerners are more independent and Easterners are more interdependent.”¹⁰⁴ These cognitive differences can also be explained by linguistic and genetic difference, as well as cultural differences other than social orientation hypothesis.

As in regarding to cognitive process, it can be demonstrated by the following sales/ management example. Experienced managers have learned that unless they can make sense of the *mental screens* that separate people from different cultures, their work is likely going to be painful, ineffective, and time-consuming. In other words, inside the managerial mind, he needs the understanding of cognitions. Management requires an understanding of what lies behind action. It requires knowledge about how our minds function (i.e., cognition), how the minds of others function, and how we can relate our own mental patterns to the patterns of others within an organizational context. In many Western cultures, sales managers typically recall subordinate successes in terms of achieved financial results, while in many Asian cultures sales managers tend to recall subordinate successes in terms of their ability to build effective sales teams. *Issue lies:* *Do we emphasize the bottom line or the means to achieve it?* And in many Western cultures, managers often assume that external actions and emotional displays are consistent with people’s internal states (i.e., *norm of authenticity*), while in many Asian cultures managers frequently see such an assumption as naïve and often inaccurate. *Issue lies:* “*What you see is what you get*” vs. “*what you see is what you see*.”

¹⁰⁴ Michael E. W. Varnum, Igor Grossmann, Shinobu Kitayama, and Richard E. Nisbett, “The Origin of Cultural Differences in Cognition- The Social Orientation Hypothesis,” Journal of Association for Psychological Science. (August 2010), 1.

According to Nisbett's book *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Different- And Why*,¹⁰⁵ cognitive processes in people develop differently from infancy based local parental nurturing patterns. As people mature, they increasingly differentiate between cognitions about external objects and events (i.e., looking outside) and cognitions about themselves (i.e., looking inside). This, too, is based on local parental and cultural upbringing. As a result, "Westerners" and "Asians" exhibit fundamental differences in how they think and approach problems.

For demonstration purpose, Dr. Wan elaborated cognitive pattern in one of his articles.¹⁰⁶ In that article Dr. Wan wrote, "One of the characteristics when theologizing in TWT is the use of the "either/or" thought of Greek philosophy."¹⁰⁷ Historically, since the time of Aristotle, scholars of western tradition have been influenced by his dualistic epistemology. Later on, the dualistic thought pattern was reinforced and refined by the Gnostics. According to the article, this "either/or" pattern has several variations: the dualistic cosmology of ancient Greece, the dialectics of Hegel (dialectic idealism), Marx (dialectic materialism), and Augustine (dialectic sociology of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Man)."¹⁰⁸ Arnold Yeung commented on Augustine's impact on TWT as following, "Unfortunately, since Augustine the church fell once again into the trap of Hellentistic dualism. This impact was prolonged by scholasticism of the Medieval Period and naturalism in the West, spreading worldwide..."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Richard E. Nisbett's book *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Different- And Why*. (Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2005).

¹⁰⁶ Wan, "Christianity in the East and the West," article II, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Wan, "Christianity in the East and the West," article III, 3

¹⁰⁸ Wan, "Christianity in the East and the West," article III, 4

¹⁰⁹ Direct quote from Dr. Wan's translation of Arnold Yeung from Chinese.

Great thinkers of the Western tradition have followed the path of the either/or though pattern for a long time. Dr. wan continued, “The compartmentalization of disciplines (extreme, reductionistic and tunnel-vision type of specialization) and by dydchotomistic conceptualization (e.g. scientific vs. spiritual, rationalistic vs. mystical, natural vs. supernatural, cultural vs. supra-cultural, human vs. divine, this-worldly vs. other-worldly, empirical vs. intuitive, etc) are just manifestation of the either/or dualistic thought pattern in TWT.”¹¹⁰

The following observation by Dr. Lin can also demonstrate this cognitive difference between the east and the west. According to Lin, when investigated the teachings among different religions and system of thoughts, one found and it is easy to see that the system of thoughts like Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity are rarely mutually exclusive at all points. Even Stoicism and Epicureanism appear to be mutually exclusive on the surface, but approach each other on closer scrutiny. This is particularly true of the Chinese teachings as regarded by the Chinese themselves. It seems that Chinese are able to admit true and beauty. Two great poets of Chinese, Po Chuyi (Chinese 白居易, eighth century) and Su Tungpo (Chinese 蘇東坡, eleventh century) lived Confucius lives, and wrote Buddhist poetry permeated with Taoist sentiments. “Especially in the case of Confucianism, it is not possible to say that a Christ cannot be a Confucianist.”¹¹¹

There are many examples of merging of culture alike all over the Chinese history. In the history, the Neo-Confucianists have looked at Confucius’ teachings. For every Chinese, Confucianism, Taoism and their blended sorts, have been well accepted as most

¹¹⁰ Wan, “Christianity in the East and the West,” article I, 3

¹¹¹ Yutang Lin, *From Pagan to Christian* (New York: Avon Book Corporation, 1959), 55-56

important and influential streams of Chinese thoughts. Basically, unlike Christianity, Chinese does not have a set of “pure” religious doctrines to exclude others. Therefore, the ST cognitive pattern may point a new direction in communication of the Gospel to the *intellectual Confucian Chinese*.

The Gospel EFC proclaimed is no doubt an ongoing process of contextualization. The Gospel was first conveyed to China through one Scottish missionary, a godly servant of the Lord two hundred years ago, named Robert Morrison.¹¹² And in the past two hundred years, the contextualization coat the west wore which is the result of the Gospel under the western culture, has been gradually removed by the industrious bible scholars of the west and the east, and may even be replaced with another coat result from the contextualization of Taiwanese culture. It is quite obvious that when the Taiwanese immigrants came to U. S. A. depending on who were the leaders, they brought along the Christian faith with the results of two hundred years of Taiwanese contextualization. Naturally, the contextualization of the Gospel is still under developed when the EFC church is playing the communicator role to the Confucian Chinese in the U. S.

Approaches to Communicate the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese

Historically, there have been numerous attempts to communicate the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese since the first day the Gospel was introduced by the Jesuits missionary. According to Samuel H. Chao study¹¹³, During the Gospel communication to Confucian Chinese process, four approaches toward Ru-Chia have been tried by missionary to China. 1) Absolute rejection. This attitude can be found in the

¹¹² Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Robert Morrison (Traditional Chinese: 馬禮遜) was a Scottish missionary, the first Christian Protestant missionary in China. Retrieved March 10, 2010.

¹¹³ Samuel H. Chao, “Confucian Chinese and the Gospel: Methodological Considerations,” AJT/1;1/87. 28-31.

fundamentalist Protestant and Roman Catholic. The many facets of Chinese culture were never appreciated, nor tolerant. Confucianism was regarded as the enemy to the missionary. This attitude led to countless misunderstandings, tensions and mistakes of missions in 19th century China.

2) Syncretistic Acceptance. Scholars observed if the idea of “culture blending” stretch overboard, it falls in the traps of the danger of “syncretism.” Ever since the Christianity has been introduced to China, there were Chinese thinkers and Christian theologians who have tried to syncretize Christianity with other religions or belief. Syncretistic seems to see the positive value in Ru-Chia. Researchers have attempted to compare, for example, Confucius’ or Mencius’ concept of Jen and Agape love and Mo Tzu’s mutual love and Christian universal love.¹¹⁴ And some other thinkers make comments like:

“Although Confucianism is correct, the way of Jesus is even better”; or “Christianity as complimenting Confucianism as points... The principle points (of Christianity) do not go beyond the two characters *Jen* 仁 and *I* 義 righteousness.” This group sees their task as the fusion of Christianity with Chinese culture, putting new wine (Christian faith) into old wineskins (Confucian though form). They argue that all the important Christian values had their Confucian counterparts: love is essentially the same as *Jen*, or “human-heartedness,” 人心, and Christian prayer is similar to Confucians “self-cultivation” 休養.¹¹⁵

Syncretists have located some synthesis with existing Ru-Chia ideologies and customs but only at superficial level.

3) Roman Catholic Concept of Accommodation. In it, efforts have been made to seek a point of contact from a general revelation of God. But in most of the cases, going too far in adapting or accommodating too little which results in either a “non-functioning witness” or an unbridgeable gulf between themselves and

¹¹⁴ Peter Lee, “Indigenous Theology- Over Cropped Land or Underdeveloped Field?” Ching Feng XVIII: 7 (March 1974).

¹¹⁵ Peter Lee, *Indigenous Theology- Over Cropped Land or Underdeveloped Field?*, 352.

their target culture. 4) In search of a more “Biblically Oriented” response. Why were so few Chinese attracted to Christianity? Samuel H. Chao suspected that¹¹⁶

Missionaries were interested in the conversions of individuals, and they considered individual’s religious beliefs separable from other aspects of his Ru-Chia thought form. Most missionaries have failed to understand the dynamics of Confucianism which has provided the very core and fiber of Chinese life.

In other words, the Protestant churches in China are not well rooted in Ru-Chia thinking. Christianity is still regarded as a foreign religion and the church a foreign institution. In this sense, the success and the continuation of the EFC movement is far more important than the earlier founders ever envisioned.

Five suggestive ways and means to communicate the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese were proposed by Samuel H. Chao:¹¹⁷

1. In order to win or evangelize Chinese to Christ, we must be identified with them and thoroughly understand their culture, traditions, and language of communication.
2. In formulating our mission “strategy”, we should avoid the mistake of the “syncretic” and “expulsive” approaches.
3. Ancestral veneration (“worship”) must be considered a cultural custom, not a religious act, (or “idolatry”) nor should such practice exclude people from joining a church, or exclude from Christian baptism, or the Lord’s Supper.
4. Employing tactics when think of evangelistic methods for Chinese.

¹¹⁶ Samuel H. Chao, “Confucian Chinese and the Gospel: Methodological Considerations,” AJT/1;1/87. 28-31.

¹¹⁷ Chao, *Confucian Chinese and the Gospel: Methodological Considerations*, 33.

5. To communicate better among non-Christian Chinese today the best method is to work with, rather than in spite of, Chinese Christians.

The above suggestions were valuable information in developing mission strategy. They emphasized on the methods of communication of the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese. However, the above strategy is emphasized more on the communicator's attitude toward the Gospel receivers. It lacks of the important element in communication of the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese. In the previous section of this thesis, the author pointed out that the principle of relationship is an important ingredient in the Chinese society, especially within family. As described earlier the paradigm of human relationships stated by Mencius strongly affirmed, first, it focuses in the family, the moral relationships and the priorities among them. Next, it implied reciprocity in between relations; "the obligations are differentiated but mutual and shared."¹¹⁸ It is safe to say that human relationship is important part of the Chinese culture. This relationship offers valuable venue whenever the topic- communicating of the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese is in consideration. In the next section, the author will deal with the relationship issue by the theoretical approach.

The Paradigm of Relational Realism

The shortcomings of the four perspectives TWT, the cognitive pattern and cognitive process, social interaction and cultural themes can be rightly adjusted and mended using the model- "Relational realism."¹¹⁹ The "Relational realism" is a methodology as well as a theory, which is based on and built upon relationship. It was

¹¹⁸ Chao, *Confucian Chinese and the Gospel: Methodological Considerations*, 33.

¹¹⁹ Enoch Wan, "The Paradigm of 'Relational Realism'" Occidental Bulletin, vol. 19 No. 2. Spring 2006. The Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS). P. O. Box 794, Wheaton, IL 60189, USA.

proposed by Dr. Wan in response to “critical realism” embraced and exemplified by Paul Hiebert. Dr. Wan offered “relational realism” as alternative paradigm.¹²⁰

In Hiebert’s writing, as a missionary in India he, “increasingly felt the need to examine the Western cultural biases of American missions and how these shaped the way we understand Scriptures, theology, the nature of the missionary task, and our response to non-Christian religions.” He said, “The Scriptures themselves were given in cultural and historical contexts, and that I needed to understand these if I wanted to understand the Scripture better.”¹²¹ His first concern was how to answer many critical questions raised from intercultural ministries. For example, some questions he raised, what must a new convert know or believe in order to be saved? Can a person who hears the gospel for the first time at a street or on the radio be truly converted? How can we translate and communicate the Scripture interculturally without distorting their message? Why do we demand radical changes and great sacrifices of new converts when in our homelands Christianity is largely captive to our cultural and social systems? Struggling with these questions, the author Hiebert testified that “he became aware of the epistemological foundations that underlay them and experienced a shift from a theology and anthropology based on positivism to ones based on critical realism.” Hiebert’s second concern was the integration of theology and anthropology in the task of mission. He is a committed evangelical Anabaptist who takes both Scriptures and theology seriously, as well as an

¹²⁰ Wan, The Paradigm of ‘Relational Realism,’ In that article, Dr. Wan defined several key-terms below for the sake of clarification. Paradigm- a coherent conceptual model for philosophical postulation and scholarly research (Kuhn 1970, Barbour 1974) or “the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises” or “interpretive framework” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:19) Ontology- the systematic study of issues related to the nature of being and the reality of existence. Epistemology- the systematic study of issues related to the nature, essence and means of knowledge and truth. Relationship- the interactive connection between personal being (Beings); whereas “relationality” is the generic quality of being connected.

¹²¹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*. Trinity Press International, Harrisburg 1999. p. xiii.

anthropologist committed to an understanding of humans and their historical and socio-cultural contexts.¹²² And since the theology is rooted in beliefs and science in facts; theology deals with ultimate spiritual concerns and science with this-worldly matters. But this juxtaposition did not fit the teachings in the Bible. Therefore, Hiebert needs a new epistemological foundation on which to base both his theology and his anthropology. As Hiebert mentioned, he discovered the critical approach to realism advocated by Charles Peiree, Ian Barbour, and others.

In Hiebert's book, first he introduced the epistemological foundation of positivism. He defined, "Positivism" and "Postpositivism" came to be used for what some call logical empiricism, a form of empiricism that views knowledge as a passive copy of reality.¹²³ Today positivism is widely used as a label for the general epistemological foundations underlying much of modern scientific thought (cf. Laudin 1996; Fuller 1991; Leplin 1984). The first assumption of positivism is an ontological one, namely, that there is a real world outside our minds- one that exists apart from our knowledge of it. And "the materialistic forms of positivism deny religious transcendence and revelation, and affirm that everything is found in a single, orderly system of nature, the most fundamental realities of which are bits of material substance."¹²⁴ As we were informed in the modern history that modern scientific materialism is based on a mechanistic view of nature. The physical world was seen as a perfect machine that could be controlled by those who had full knowledge of how it worked. And positivistic science is based on the assumption that scientists, by means of instruments and sense, can gain an

¹²² Hiebert, *Missionary Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, xiv.

¹²³ Hiebert, *Missionary Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, 3. The term "positivism" was used first by Henri, comte de Saint-Simon, to designate the scientific method and its extension to philosophy.

¹²⁴ Hiebert, *Missionary Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, 6.

accurate, objective knowledge of reality. Moreover, knowledge is potentially exhaustive, and all problems are solvable in principle.

Central to positivist theory is the idea of progress- of faith in human reason to gain control of all areas of life. And the goal of modern science is to build one Grand Unified Theory (GUT) that accounts for all of reality in terms of unchanging, universal principles. But the explosion of knowledge has made it increasingly difficult for science to maintain a single unified theory of reality. Given the explosion of scientific knowledge and the lack of a unifying theory, it should not surprise us that science has been fragmented into what Clifford Geertz (1965:97) calls a stratigraphic approach to knowledge. In sum, the epistemological foundation based on positivism claims that (1) modernity is built on positivism and the technological knowledge it generated. (2) The connection between positivism and modernity is the division of reality into two separate and largely unrelated realms, natural and supernatural.

Positivism has its effect on Christianity. Christians live in particular historical and cultural contexts and no matter how hard they try to avoid, that their reading of Scripture is deeply influenced by the cultures and times in which they live. So it should not surprise us that the theologians and missionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were influenced by modern science and its positivist epistemological foundations. And many protestant theologians, like most scientists, do not examine their epistemological foundation. In Hiebert's words, "A positive stance in theology postulates a direct correspondence between the Bible and theology- between the messages found in the texts

and the interpretation of them in the mind of theologian, who is seen as an objective observer.”¹²⁵

And positivist view of missions led us to problems. Most protestant missionaries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were convinced not only of the truthfulness of Christianity but also of the superiority of Western “civilization.” And this attitude of Western intellectual superiority had its roots in the ideas of progress and “manifest destiny” in which both Christianity and science worked together to contribute to the betterment of the world morally and materially (Bosch 1991:298-302).

Missionaries believed themselves to be participating in a worldwide crusade of human advancement.

And positivism dictated the missionaries’ gospel in several important ways. First, it divorced the cognitive from the affective and moral dimensions of life, and defined the gospel largely in terms of knowledge. The missionaries sought to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over other religions on the base of reason. Second, positivism led to formal equivalence translations of the Bible. Meaning was thought to lie in precise words that correspond directly with reality. These translations often lost the meanings of the original texts because they did not take into account the contextual nature of every language. Third, influenced by positivism, missionaries established schools for the training of leaders in which the acquisition of knowledge was seen as the central qualification for ministry. This emphasis on cognitive knowledge as the sine qua non for ministry has led to an explosion of educational institutions around the world and the pursuit of academic degree. Fourth, the supernatural/natural dualism implicit in the Greek

¹²⁵ Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, 19.

and positivist worldview deeply influenced mission thought. It led to the division between “evangelism” and the “social gospel” and to an unending debate about the relationship between the two. It also led many missionaries to seek their task as twofold: as an evangelism and church planting to Christianize the people, and as building school and hospitals to civilize them. The latter were often seen as the tools to achieve the former. Their curricula and medicines, however, were based primarily on the sciences. Courses on the Bible were taught and prayer meetings held before medical work began, but these often reinforced the fact that science was seen as the answer to “natural” problems. It should not surprise us that many people adopted the science we brought but rejected our Christianity.¹²⁶ Therefore, the epistemological foundation based on positivism needs to be shifted.

Table 6 “Critical Realism” vis-à-vis “Relational Realism”

POSITION	NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYSTEM OF KNOWLEDGE	THE UMPIRE'S RESPONSE
CRITICAL REALISM	“The external world is real. Our knowledge of it is partial but can be true. Science is a map or model. It is made up of successive paradigms that bring us to closer approximations of reality and absolute truth.”	“Each field in science presents a different blue-print of reality. These are complementary to one another. Integration is achieved, not by reducing them all to one model, but by seeing their interrelationship. Each gives us partial insights into reality.”	“I call it the way I see it, but there is a real pitch and objective standard against which I must judge it. I can be shown to be right or wrong.”

¹²⁶ Hiebert, *Missionary Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, 24-28.

Table 6 “Critical Realism” vis-à-vis “Relational Realism” (cont.)

R E L A T I O N A L	“The external world is real but that reality is primarily based on the vertical relationship of God & His created order (Acts 14:14-17, 17:24-31), secondarily based on horizontal relationship within the created order (i.e. spirit world, human world, and natural order.)	God is the Truth: His word (incarnate personhood & inscripturate- reveled & written) is truth. His work (creation, redemption, transformation, etc.) is truthful. Therefore, truth and reality are: multi-dimensional, multi-level, multi-stage and multi-contextual.	Man, without God and His revelation (incarnationate and inscripturate Word) and illumination (H.S.), can be blinded to truth & reality.
R E A L I S M	God is the absolute Truth. Science is a road map and may provide human-based paradigm that cannot exclusively claim to be the only way to closer approximations of reality and absolute truth. Scientists, with a modernist orientation, has neither monopoly to truth nor can dogmatically/conclusively/exclusively make pronouncement on reality.	All human efforts & disciplines (science, theology, philosophy, etc.) without vertical relationship to God (the Absolute Reality) at best are defective ways to approximate truth and reality (for horizontal=being uni-dimensional; single-level=human plain field; uni-contextual=shutting out the spirit world of God & angels (Satan & fallen angels included). Truth & reality are best to be comprehended and experienced in relational networks of God & the created orders (3: angel, humanity and nature).	Therefore, he is not the umpire to make the final call of being: real or illusion, truth or untruth, right or wrong, good or bad. No human judgment is final, nor can it be dogmatic/conclusive; without the vertical relationship to God who is the absolute Truth & the most Real.

On the other hands, the epistemological foundation based on critical realism claims that, in terms of nature of knowledge, “The external world is real. And our knowledge of it is partial but can be true. Science is a map or model. It is made up of successive paradigms that bring us to closer approximations of reality and absolute truth.”¹²⁷ And in terms of relationship between system of knowledge, “Each field in science presents a different blue-print of reality. These are complementary to one another. Integration is achieved, not by reducing them all to one model, but by seeing their

¹²⁷ Hiebert, *Missionological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, 37.

interrelationship. Each gives us partial insights into reality.” Table 6 lists the comparisons between the “critical realism” and the “relational realism.”¹²⁸

Since one’s epistemology is based on his ontology, according to Dr. Wan, “relational realism” is to be defined on two levels. Ontologically, “relational realism” is defined as “the systematic understanding that ‘reality’ is primarily based on the ‘vertical relationship’ between God and the created order and secondarily ‘horizontal relationship’ within the created order.”¹²⁹ Based on this understanding, “relational realism” informs us that: (1) God is the most Real, only in relationship to Him there is the existence of the created order. (i.e. the reality and existence of angelic, human and natural orders co-existing and interacting relationally.) (2) God is the Absolute and infinite who transcends time, space and circumstance; whereas His created order is otherwise until in the “eschaton” when there will still be distinction between the Creator and the created order.

Epistemologically, “relational realism” is to be defined as “the systematic understanding that God is the absolute Truth and the perfect knowledge, and only in relationship to HIM is there the possibility of human knowledge and understanding of truth and reality.”¹³⁰

Therefore, then: (3) Human understanding is best comprehended and experienced in relational networks of God and the created orders (3 systems in existence: angels, humanity, and the natural order co-existing and interacting relationally). (4) Apart from relationship with God in terms of His enablement (common grace and general revelation) and enlightenment (special grace and special revelation), knowledge and human

¹²⁸ Table 6, 7, and 8 are cited here by the permission from Dr. Wan.

¹²⁹ Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, 37.

¹³⁰ Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, 37.

understanding is impossible and imperfect. The understanding of the two level of “relational realism” can be seen in Table 7.

“Relationship is an essential nature within the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and among humanity (male and female). The reality of God’s dealing with the created order is to be understood in terms of multi-level, multi-dimensional, multi-stage relationship of relationship.”¹³¹ (See table 8) And Table 9 is the illustration of relational realism.

Table 7 Two level of “Relational Realism”

TYPE	TOPIC	CHARACTERISTIC	THEME
EPISTEMOLOGY	Relational theologizing: Systematic understanding of God and His Word/work in relational terms and interactive networks	-not rationalistic (i.e. mere propositional) -not existentialist/humanistic -not positivist (modernist/scientific) -integrationist (not dychotomistic nor dualist) and interdisciplinary	W I S D O M
ONTOLOGY	Relational Christianity Christian faith and practice in relational terms and interactive networks	-multi-dimensional -multi-level -multi-contextual -multi-stage	Trinitarian Paradigm

Chinese culture is relational culture. Chinese love harmony and peace. In case of conflict, Chinese people tend to avoid direct confrontation but seek mediator for solution. Thus, it is easy for the Chinese people to understand peace concepts, such as, the prince of peace, Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, counselor, etc. (Romans 5:24; 2

¹³¹ Wan, “The Paradigm of ‘Relational Realism’” *Occidental Bulletin*, vol. 19 No. 2. p.3.

Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:15-16.) in contrast with relational concept, the western legal justification concept, such as “The righteous will live by faith” (Romans 1:17) is harder for the Chinese people to comprehend.

Table 8 Multi-level Multi-dimension and Multi-stage of Relationship

ORDER/ SYSTEM		RELATIONSHIP (MULTI-DIMENSION, MULTI-LEVEL, MULTI-CONTEXT)		BIBLICAL REFERENCE
Uncreated order -Triune God	essence	Intra-trinitarian relationship of Father, Son & H. S. with perfect unity & harmony		John 17; Phil. 2:1-17
	nature	Absolute, transcendent, infinite		
C R E A T E O R D E R	Angel	essence	Created and ruled by God	Heb. 1:14; 2:6-8, 16
		nature	- Not: absolute, perfect, infinite; but superior to humanity & nature - Since the Fall- disharmony	
	Human	essence	- Willed to existence by God (“let us...”) - Created with God’s breathe & image both male & female (reaffirmed even after the Fall and the Flood) - Designated by God with authority to rule & subdue, provided with food - Blessed by God to be fruitful & multiply	Gen. 1:26-30; 2:7-9; 5:1-2; 9:1-7; Ps. 8; Heb 2; Eph. 2:11-22
		nature	Strife, conflict, disharmony since the Fall Within the redeemed humanity: Reconciled and mediated by Christ with unity restored and harmony obtained	
	Nature	essence	Created and sustained by God Cursed after the Fall and in Christ restored. By/for/through Him	Acts 17:26 Eph. 2:1-14; Col. 1:16-18
		nature	Harmony before the Fall Cursed and groaning for redemption “shalom” ushering in by the messianic rule of Christ	

Chinese culture is relational culture. Chinese love harmony and peace. In case of conflict, Chinese people tend to avoid direct confrontation but seek mediator for solution. Thus, it is easy for the Chinese people to understand peace concepts, such as, the prince of peace, Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, counselor, etc. (Romans 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:15-16.) in contrast with relational concept, the western legal justification concept, such as “The righteous will live by faith” (Romans 1:17) is harder for the Chinese people to comprehend. To Chinese, the concept like

human was created in the image of God and was good (before the Fall) which can easily understood and related. Also the concept of Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are three in one can be easily comprehended by Chinese people. Because as the author mentioned in the previous section (p. 114), in contrast to TWT, the cognitive pattern of ST is both/and, its cognitive process is synthetic, its social relation is relational/complimentary, and its cultural theme is family oriented. The relationship between Triune God and humanity can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9 Relationship between Triune God & Humanity (Christians)

TRIUNE GOD	...relationship...	HUMANITY	CHRISTIAN
Father	--Created, ruled & sustained by God (Ps. 103:19-22 to Ps. 104) --“in Him we live, move & have our being” (Acts 17:26)	-“Male or female, Jew or Gentile, slave or free...all in one in Christ” (Gal. 3:28)	Known Foreordained Called
Son	--“...by...for...through Him” (Col. 1:15-20)	-“all together...one body...one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 3:1-4:7)	Atoned, mediated Redeemed Reconciled
Holy Spirit	--“...first fruits of the Spirit...those God fore-knew...predestined...called...justified...glorified” (Rom. 8:1-30; Gal. 4:1-7)		Regenerated Indwelled Endowed (gifts)

In TWT, the Gospel is usually presented as the forgiveness of sin by the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died to save the condemned from the wrath of a righteous God who sees sinners as justified. The socio-cultural background of Western civilization for the doctrine of salvation of TWT can be reviewed as follows: “Western culture has a Greco-Roman, political-legal base and Judeo-Christian ethical foundation. The Greek social system of city-state, the Roman law, etc. have been well developed for ‘millennia’ in the West. The influence of the Judeo-Christian value system

and moral code has left its mark in the mind and heart of people in the context of western civilization, so much so that anthropologists who have conducted cross-cultural comparative studies have classified the western culture as a ‘guilt culture’ in contrast to the ‘shame’ culture of the East (e.g. Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, etc.)”

Dr. Wan suggested, “In Sino-theology, salvation should be presented as having “en-qing (恩情)” (graciously-intimate-relationship among the “three persons of the Trinity”) and “en-yue (恩約)” (gracious-covenant of the Triune God for human kind) as the foundation of salvation due to the high value of Chinese culture on relationship. The focus of salvation is “yong-ru jiu-en-lun (榮辱救恩論)” (Christ’s shame-bearing death and honor-gaining resurrection) for honor is very desirable and shame is to be shunned at all cost by the Chinese.”¹³² Jesus Christ should be present as the “zhong-bao (中保)” (mediator), “jiu-shu-zhu (救贖主)” (redeemer) and “fu-he-zhe (復和者)” (reconciler) because “guan-xi” (關係) (relationship) is of supreme important and harmonious relationship is the ideal for Chinese.

As the author mentioned earlier, Chinese people try to avoid confrontation, which would cause someone to “lose face” and run the risk of breaking the relationship. The use of match-making in traditional marriage arrangements, the go-between for business deals, the guarantee of a reputable person rather than the signing of a legal document, etc. are all time-honored cultural practices that prepare the Chinese to accept Christ as mediator, redeemer and reconciler. Christ is the a “go-between” between God and human beings because salvation is best understood by the Chinese in terms of a reconciled vertical

¹³² Enoch Wan, “Christianity in the East and the West,” article IV. 1.

relationship with God and a peaceful horizontal relationship with one's fellow man (Wan 1998, 1999).

Theoretical Approach Summary

In this section, the author attempted to investigate the concept of the theology of contextualization by engaging with Traditional Western Theology (TWT) with the aid from Dr. Wan's study. Contextualization and theologizing of the Gospel to Chinese is crucial to its taking root, flourishing, and finally bearing fruits in the Chinese land. The theological approach was also intended to raise the awareness to the evangelists who are interested in becoming an ambassador of Christ to Confucian Chinese. The findings revealed to us that the traditional western evangelistic approach to the Confucian Chinese should be reconsidered. One alternative based on the relationship- Relational Realism proposal by Dr. Wan may point us to a new direction.

Theological Framework

Apostle Paul is by far the most recognized and the greatest evangelist ever lived. His mission-oriented life style dedicated to the preaching of the gospel to the gentiles inspired us greatly. Paul, a keen culture observer, has a talent of speaking messages that his audience can easily find relevance. In his famous message on the Mars Hills in the book of Acts, proclaimed the Gospel directly into the Athens' culture. In a similar manner, in the book of Romans, Paul employed his cultural interpretative talents, speaking directly into the Romans culture. As it is well known that the letter to Romans is the most profound interpretations of the Gospel in terms of theological doctrines written by Apostle Paul. It is full of rhetorical apologetic concerns in dealing with Roman Empires' contemporary culture. Roman Empire is a secular society, in which human

accomplishments through building grandeur architecture is greatly eulogized; her advancement in the managing of law and order skills help fortify and unite her conquered subjects into a taunting, civilized society. This thesis intended, thorough the study of NT Romans, to investigate from “relational” angle the Gospel that Paul related to his contemporary audience. The relationship that Paul emphasizes may point us to a new direction in the communication of the Gospel to the Confucian Chinese in postmodern culture.

The Gospel and the Evangelism in NT Romans

People asked, “What is the theme of the letter Romans?” Some scholars answered, “to make the relationship of Jews and Gentiles within the new covenant people of God.” And others respond “justification by faith” as the answer. And still others regarded “the righteousness of God” as the theme of the letter. Certainly a good case can be made individually for each answer, but the theme of the letter is the “Gospel” as Author Douglas Moo suggested seems shed another light in view of the evangelistic work in NT Romans.¹³³ The message of the gospel is that God brings guilty sinners into relationship with himself and gives them eternal life when they believe in his son Jesus, the Christ. “The word “gospel” and the cognate verb “evangelize” are particularly prominent in the introduction (cf. 1:1, 2, 9, 15) and conclusion (15:16, 19) of Romans -- its epistolary “frame””¹³⁴ and this is what Paul’s pride embedded in this statement in the letter: 1:16-17. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel....” “True, Paul goes on to speak of the interplay of salvation, the interplay of Jew and Gentiles, and justification by faith; and each has been advanced as the theme of the letter. But they are all elaborations of the main topic of

¹³³ Douglas J. Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans 1996), 27-33.

¹³⁴ Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans*, 29.

these verses, the gospel¹³⁵. Thus, it can be safely said that the theme of the letter Romans is gospel-oriented, with highly evangelistic concerns. The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament has this comment, "Paul's Epistle to the Romans is still transforming people's lives, just the way it transformed Martin Luther and John Wesley. The one Scripture above *all* others that brought Luther out of mere religion into the joy of salvation by grace, through faith, was Rom 1:17: "The just shall live by faith." The Protestant Reformation and the Wesleyan Revival were both the fruit of this wonderful letter written by Paul from Corinth about the year A.D. 56."¹³⁶ The comment echoes what the gospel of Jesus Christ really is: transforming lives. The book Hebrews 13:8 tells us: "Jesus is the same, yesterday, and today, and forever." Henceforth, the NT Romans may be studied through the evangelistic lens: reading Gospel as the main theme with evangelism emphasized. As proposed by Dr. Wan. See Table 10.¹³⁷

Table 10 The Outline of NT Romans Based on Gospel with Evangelism Emphasized

THEME: GOSPEL	KEY VERSE- Romans 1:16	OUTLINE	EMPHASIS: EVANGELISM
ESSENCE	"...because it is the power of God..."	1:18-8:12-15:13	The Power of Mission and its Effect
PLAN	"...for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."	Chapters 9 -11	The Priority of Missionary Work
MESSENGER	"I am not ashamed of the gospel..."	1:1-17 15:14-33 16:1-27	Missionary's Attitude Missionary's Strategy Missionary's Relational Greetings

¹³⁵ Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans*, 30.

¹³⁶ Warren Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Colorado Spring: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1992), 360.

¹³⁷ Wan, "Introduction to Missional Strategies- From the Romans." *Go to the World*, July-September 2005, 1.

Table 10 can be briefly unpacked in the following paragraphs, in which all points to one conclusion: NT Romans is based on Gospel with evangelism emphasis.

As indicates in the Table 10, the essence of NT Romans is the power of mission and its effect. From 1:18 to chapter 8, the scripture covers the following topics: sin (1:18-3:20), salvation (3:21-5:21), and sanctification (chapters 6-8). From Romans 1:18, it is the door leads us to God's courtroom. Until man knows he is a sinner, he cannot appreciate the gracious salvation God offers through Jesus Christ.

Sin- the Gentile world is guilty (1:18-32), the Jewish world is guilty (2:1-3:8), and the whole world is guilty (3:9-20). As long as we defend ourselves and commend ourselves, we cannot be saved by God's grace.

Salvation- Paul had proves that all men are sinners; next he was to explain how sinners can be saved. Salvation is the main theme in this section (3:21-5:1). Salvation is *justification* by faith. Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinners righteous in Christ on the basis of the worked done of Christ on the cross. Justification is an act, not a process; it is something God does, not man. Justification is the declaration by God. God sees our righteousness attributed by Christ in place of our sinfulness. It is declared; it is done. Nothing more needs to be done. But how can the holy God declare sinners righteous? Paul answered these questions in two ways. First he explained justification by faith (Rom 3:21-31); then he illustrated justification by faith from the life of Abraham (Rom 4:1-25). In chapter 5, Paul continued to explain how justification by faith can the believer sure that it will last? How is it possible for God to save a sinner through the death of Christ on the cross? Paul's explanation aimed at two

basic truths: the blessings of our justification (Rom 5:1-11), and the basis for our justification (Rom 5:12-21).

Sanctification- imagine during a court session, an attorney will often rise to his feet and say, "Your Honor, I object!" Some of the Romans Christians must have felt like objection as they heard Paul's letter being read. In Romans 6-8 Paul defend his doctrine of justification by faith and Paul also explained sanctification. Sanctification is the process whereby God makes the believer more and more like Christ. Sanctification may change from day to day. Justification never changes. He told how we can live lives of victory (Rom 6), liberty (Rom 7), and security (Rom 8). He explained our relationship to the flesh, the Law, and the Holy Spirit.

In sum, even though human, because of sins, can sink so low than the beasts, God's power is so great that when we stand silent before Him as sinners that He can save us. God's saving power is the essence of the Gospel and is the power of mission.

The Priority of Missionary's Work- Paul temporarily diverts his attention from the topic of justification by faith to the nation of Israel. In Romans 8 Paul had argued that the believer is secure in Jesus Christ and that God's election would stand (Rom 8:28-30). But someone might ask "What about the Jews? They were chosen by God, and yet now they are set aside and God is building His church. Did God fail to keep His promises to Israel?" In other words, the very character of God was at doubt here. If God was not faithful to the Jews, how do we know He will be faithful to the church? Therefore, the emphasis in Rom 9 is on Israel's past election, in Rom 10 on Israel's present rejection, and in Rom 11 on Israel's future restoration.¹³⁸ Israel is the only nation

¹³⁸ Warren Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Colorado Spring: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1992), 390-98.

in the world with a complete salvation history - past present, and future. From chapters 9 to 11, Paul continues to tell about God's sovereignty but his emphasis is the missionary priority.

In sum, in Paul's mind God's salvation is for everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. Again, the Apostle Paul's message in this section is Gospel-oriented evangelism emphasized.

The main body of Romans is a treatise on Paul's gospel, bracketed by an epistolary opening (1:1-17) and conclusion (15:14-16:27). (Eight of the 11 occurrences in Romans of *euangelion* ["gospel"] and *euangelizomai* [to evangelize"] are in these passages.)¹³⁹

In the opening verses of the letter, Paul introduces himself to the believers in Rome. Some of them must have known him personally, since he greets them in the final chapter; but many of them he had never met. In these first seventeen verses, Paul seeks to link himself to his Roman readers in three ways.¹⁴⁰

- 1) He presented his credentials (Rom. 1:1-7). Paul was a servant of Jesus Christ (v. 1a) and an apostle (v. 1b); he was a preacher of the Gospel (vv. 1c-4); and was a missionary to the Gentiles (vv. 5-7).
- 2) He expressed his concern (Rom. 1:8-15). Paul was thankful for them (v. 8); and he prayed for them (vv. 9-10) and loved them (vv. 11-12). He felt that he was in debt to them (vv. 13-14) and was eager to visit them (v. 15).
- 3) He affirmed his confidence (Rom. 1:16-17). Paul knows the origin of the gospel is the gospel of Christ (v. 16a) and the operation of the Gospel is the power of

¹³⁹ Douglas J. Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans 1996), 39.

¹⁴⁰ Warren Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Colorado Spring: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1992), 363-364.

God (v. 16b). He also knows that the outcome of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (v. 16c) and the outreach of the Gospel is "to everyone that believeth" (vv. 16d-17). These verses are made up of four subordinate clauses, each supporting or illuminating the one before it. Paul's pride in the gospel (v.16a) is the reason why he is so eager to preach the gospel in Rome (v.15). This pride, stems from the fact that the gospel contains God's saving power for everyone who believes (v.16b). Why the gospel brings salvation is explained in v. 17a: it manifests God's righteousness, righteousness based on faith. Verse 17b provides scripture confirmation for this connection between righteousness and faith.¹⁴¹

Moo's grammatical analysis states that v. 16a implies a shift in focus.¹⁴² Since the gospel is the very essence of his ministry (vv. 1, 9) and is also the message that Paul wants to bring to Rome (v. 15). Now, using v. 16a to make the transition, Paul turns his attention away from his own ministry and focus on it on the gospel. After that nothing more is said of Paul's mission plans or the Romans (except for brief interjections).¹⁴³ In other words, the epistolary material of 1:1-15 and 15:14ff. "frames" what appears to be a theological treatise. Therefore, vv. 16-17 serves as the transition into the body by stating Paul's theme. In short, it is safe to say that vv. 1:1-17 showed that Paul as a messenger of God to the Gentiles, he knows who he is; what his concerns are and who is behind the gospel. These verses truly reflected Paul's attitude toward the gospel and his conviction and commitment toward the Gentiles.

¹⁴¹ Douglas J. Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans*, Eerdmans Grand Rapid, 1996. 64.

¹⁴² Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans*, 64.

¹⁴³ Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans*, 64.

Continue on the same tread of thought. If Romans 15:14-24, depicted Paul's ministry to the Gentiles then Rom. 15:25-33, demonstrated the Gentiles' ministry to the Jews. In the former, Paul's ministry has the following characteristics: received by grace (vv. 14-15), centered in the Gospel (v.16), was done for God's glory and power (v. 17-19), and was according to God's plan (vv. 20-24). In the latter, Paul and his associates received special offering from the Gentile churches. The offering was a token of love from the Gentiles toward their Jewish brethren, and serve as a bond that brought them closer together.

The offering represents as the paying of a debt the Gentiles had received spiritual wealth from the Jews. And it also served as a return of favor from the Gentiles to Jews, for they had received benefit from the Jews the Word of God and the son of God. Not only Paul sees the offering payment as a debt but also a fruit because unfortunately there were still some Jews who opposed the message of grace to the Gentiles and who wanted the Gentiles to become Jews and accept the Jewish Law. It was Paul's strategy to make a strong bond between the mother church at Jerusalem and the daughter churches in the rest of the empire.

Finally, through the record of Paul's greeting to twenty-six people by name, as well as two unnamed saints, and several churches meeting in homes, chapter 16 confided that Paul was a friend maker as well as a soul winner. Friend making relies on building relationship. In the postmodern era, the spreading of gospel can never rely on knowledge transmission only; it also takes a continuation of transformed life demonstration to unbelievers.

Among them, there are some foes to avoid (vv. 17-20). Not everyone welcome the gospel Paul preached. Since making friends is the means to preach the gospel, not the end, obedience to the Lord and testimony to others take precedent over making friends. From Paul's greetings, it tells a lot about his evangelism-centered friend making principle.

There were some friends to greet (vv. 1-16). Phebe believed was a deaconess at Cenchrea; she was a helper to Paul and to other Christians. Priscilla and Aquila had risked their lives for Paul in the past. Four "beloved" are called by Paul: Epenetus (Rom 16:5), Amplias (Rom 16:8), Stachys (Rom 16:9), and Persis (Rom 16:12), but Epenetus stood out for he was one of the first converts in Asia (1 Corinthians 16:15). Andronicus and Junias at one time had been in prison with Paul. The Rufus mentioned in Rom 16:13 may be the same as the one named in Mark 15:21, but we cannot be certain. These people had labored in Paul's ministry and the ministry of churches. They had fought for the Gospel and had earned Paul's respect and were remembered here as if they were on Paul's ministerial warriors list.

And finally there were some faithful servants to honor (vv. 21-27). Timothy, Paul's "son in the faith," and Lucius, was a fellow Jew, as were Jason and Sosipater. Tertius was the secretary who wrote the letter as Paul dictated it. Gaius was the man in whose home Paul was residing at Corinth. First Corinthians 1:14 told how Paul won Gaius; to Christ and baptized him when he founded the church in Corinth. Apparently there was an assembly of believers meeting in his house. Erastus held a high office in the city, probably the treasurer. The Gospel reached into high places in Corinth as well as into low places (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 6:9-11).

The final benediction is the longest one Paul ever wrote. It reflects not only his special ministry to the Gentiles (Out of the twenty-four names in chapter 16, over one half are Latin and Greek), but also confides Paul's personal relationship with these saints in Rome. Paul's greetings in Romans 16 have one unique feature- personal/relational embedded in the gospel he proclaimed. Therefore, the NT Romans is not only based on gospel with evangelism emphasis, but also relational.

Table 11 helps to demonstrate one point: Gospel is the main theme in NT Romans.

Table 11 Gospel Theme in NT Romans¹⁴⁴

SCRIPTURE CHAPTERS		JEWS AND GENTILES
1-8	People need gospel and salvation so they can be saved.	Everyone who believes gospel will be saved by the power of God (1:16-17). Everyone has sinned and is in need of gospel: Gentiles (1:18-32) and Jews (2:1-3:8). Everyone who believed God in faith can be justified (3:21—4:25).
9-11	Jews, Gentiles and Gospel	Both Jews and Gentiles are in God's salvation plan.
12	Gospel applications: in daily living	Separate from the "world" (12:2). Love is the living principle (12:9).
13	Gospel applications: submit to government authority.	Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities (13:1 & 4-5)
14-15	Gospel applications: to weaker Brothers and Sisters in Christ.	Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on dispute matters (14:1-6; 15:1-2). Accept one another... in order to praise God. (15:7)

The Relational Paradigm in NT Romans

This personal/relational in NT Romans, in Dr. Wan's conception, can be read in three relational paradigms: 1) the horizontal relationship between Paul and church members. Paul, longing to visit Roman, has never been to Romans at the time he was

¹⁴⁴ Wan, "Introduction to Missional Strategies- From the Romans," *Go to the World*, July-September 2005. 1.

writing to them. He had planned many times to visit Roman but have been prevented from doing so. (Romans 1:8-13) Therefore, Paul wrote this letter to announce his plan and to solicit prayers from the church members before he came to them. (Romans 1:8-10) He is eager to visit them and to impart some spiritual gift to make them strong; then later be sent to preach the gospel to Spain (Romans 15:23-28). 2) The Gospel in Romans reads in relational paradigm: vertical and horizontal. See Table 13. 3) The “Cross” in Romans reads in relational paradigm. The author of this thesis will concentrate only on the vertical and horizontal relational paradigm as proposed by Dr. Wan. Each category in the table 12 matrix will be separately discussed in the following section.

Table 12 Vertical (God-Man) and Horizontal (Man-Man) Relational Paradigm in Romans

	VERTICAL (GOD-MAN)		HORIZONTAL (MAN-MAN)	
	BELIEVERS	NON-BELIEVERS	BELIEVERS	NON-BELIEVERS
As Group	God's children 12:1-2 God's Elects (Chapters 9-11)	1:18	12:3-8 13:1-2 Chapter 14	
As Individual	1:11-17; 15:14-33		1:14-15	

Vertical Relational (God-Man, believers) as group- in Romans 12:1-2, Paul urges the brothers in Christ to offer bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Since all sacrifice is dead, there is no such thing as living sacrifice. To whom was Paul's message addressing? They are the sinners revealed in the first eleven chapters of the letter of Romans. And it was God's mercy to the sinners that He sent his Son to die on the cross for their sins. The sinners become God's children in Jesus Christ. It is this God-man relation brings all God's children back to Him through the salvation plan of Jesus Christ. Whereas in chapters 9-11, Paul was addressing to “my brothers, those of my race, the

people of Israel," they are the elects of the covenant. "Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and promises." (9:4) Though he was the "apostle to the Gentiles," Paul was still so concerned for his people that he was willing to be "cursed" (9:3) to bring Jews to the Savior.

Paul's teaching Jesus is the Messiah was not welcome and was rejected by the Jews. How could it be that the righteousness-conscious Jews would find their way to God barred, while those who were ignorant of righteousness were welcomed by God as long-lost children? From 9:30-10:21, Paul contrasts the way of faith with the way of the law. Israel, following after a law of *righteousness*, *did* not attain it-while the Gentiles, not seeking *righteousness by* the law, found it by faith in Christ.

But not all Jews have rejected God's message of salvation (11:1-10). Paul recited the experience of Elijah to show that there had always been a faithful remnant among the people. Part of God's sovereign choice involves bringing a remnant of his people back to himself. It seems that Paul had a vision for the church to be a place where all Jews and Gentiles would be united in their love of God and in obedience to Christ (11:11-24). A person's ethnic background and social status would be irrelevant (see Gal 3:28) - what mattered would be his or her faith in Christ. God chose the Jews, just as he chose the Gentiles, and he still works *to* unite Jews and Gentiles in a new Israel, a new Jerusalem, ruled by his Son. In fact, God's mercy is on all (11:25-32). There will be room for both Jews and Gentiles in the plan of God. The details of exactly how God will do all this are aptly called by Paul a mystery! God's elects includes Jews and Gentiles.

Vertical Relational (God-Man, non-believers) as group- in 1:18, Paul recognizes that as God's righteousness was revealed (1:17), so was his wrath. Since God is just. The

flip side of God's righteousness is his wrath against evil. Certain aspects of human character elicit God's wrath. It is the response of his holiness to all wickedness and rebellion. *Ungodliness* means lack of reverence for God, even rebellion against him; *unrighteousness* refers to unjust actions between people. As the human predicament has both a vertical and horizontal aspect. Once humans have abandoned God, it will be consequently changes in their relationships with each other. The *truth* is the reality that there exists a God who deserves worship and obedience. When Adam and Eve were confronted with sin, they confirmed their rebellion by denying and excusing their wrongdoing. God cannot tolerate sin because his nature is morally perfect. He cannot ignore or condone such willful rebellion. He wants to remove the sin and restore the sinner, but the sinner must not distort or reject the truth. But God's anger erupts against those who persist in sinning.

Vertical Relational (God-Man, believers) as individual- Paul as the Gospel forerunner and the Spiritual gifts giver, intended to visit the believers in Roman and benefit them (1:11). The spiritual gift Paul imparts will deepen their faith. And the spiritual gifts will further evidence that it is not from man but from God. It will help bring believers toward God and understand what their faith meant in their families, in their businesses, and in other relationships. Paul knew that this God-man reconciliation relationship through Jesus Christ, the Gospel the good news has the power of life transformation. That relationship gives him thrust and that is why he was not *ashamed of the gospel*, even though the gospel was held in contempt by those *who* did not believe. Paul was not intimidated by the opposition he encountered (1:17). This relationship also promoted Paul to write this letter to the believers in Rome (15:14-32). It was his good

intention (14), his special privilege of being a minister to the Gentiles and his priestly duty of proclaiming the Gospel of God (15-16), his service (17), his obedience (18-19), his ambition (20-22) and his plan (23-33).

Horizontal Relational (Man-Man, believers) as group- from chapter 12 and on, Paul switched from doctrinal discussion to practical applications. If in the first eleven chapters God's mercy was revealed to sinners through the action that Jesus had taken for the sinners; then the last five chapters called for sinner's obligation toward God's mercy, to live for God in Christ.

In 12:3-8, Paul elaborated the believer's new relationship in Christ that (1) he knew that his Apostle's authority was not earned by his own but given by the grace of God. Same is true to the Jews and the Gentiles; no one is better than the others, all are dependent on God's mercy for their salvation. All people are sinners on God's righteousness scale. But God, in his discernment, according to his grace has given each believer a measure of faith with which to serve him (v. 3). (2) The sinners have a new identity of God's redeemed people, though do not have same functions but are parts of one body. And since our bodies cannot be taken apart, so each believer in the body of Christ, belong to all the others (vv.4-8). (3) The relationship discussion among believers as Paul continued on this topic. In 12:9-13, "sincere love," is the heading for what follows, as Paul proceeds to explain just what sincere love really is. The love of Christians for others was grounded in, and enabled by, the love of God expressed in the gift of his Son. Paul uses the word *agape*, to express a distinctive nature of the love that was to be the foundation of all their relationships.

Love must be sincere. The key ingredient in interpersonal relationships is love — God's love (*agape*) the self-sacrificial love that cares for the well-being of others. All the gifts that are exercised in the body should be the demonstration of this love. Sincere love is not blind, but be able to recognize good and evil. Believers must be careful that the use of their gifts does not lead them to evil motives or actions (v. 9). Sincere love should demonstrate brotherly love and honor others (v.10). Sincere love should never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spirit fervor (v. 11). Sincere love guarantees us rejoicing in love, patience in suffering, faithful in prayer (v. 12). Sincere love should motive us care for God's people who are in need. Finally, in scripture 13:1-2, which lead to (4) submit to the governing authorities. From historical perspective, before the spread of Christianity, Judaism was a permitted religion in the Roman Empire and protected by Roman law. During the rest of the first century after the death of Jesus, Christianity was regarded as a sect of Judaism. But in Paul's perception that Christianity is not a sect of Judaism which is makeup of the new people of God- they are not like Jews, they may not be protected under Roams law as Judaism had received. Thus through chapter 13, Paul urges believers to be careful in their relationships with the governing authorities. Paul commanded believers submit to God by submitting to those whom God has placed in authority over them. God is the one who sets all authorities in place. He allows all governments and leaders to function under his sovereign will.

Finally, the horizontal relational (Man-Man, believers) as group can be seen in chapter 14, the believers in the church in Rome came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Other than the major difference between Jewish believers and Gentile believers, there were other differences such as, some were slaves, some were masters, some were wealthy,

the majority was poor. There were also differences in spiritual maturity among believers. So Paul instructed the church to *accept* (*proslambanesthe*), welcome and love one another without judging or condemning- no matter how weak, or immature someone's faith may seem. Paul was not talking about doctrines essentials, but about differences of life-style. Since every believer is weak in some areas and strong in others. Paul advised believers not to quarrel about issues that are matter of opinion (v. 1). As a famous saying we all familiar with by Peter Meiderlen reads like this, "in things necessary unity; in things not necessary liberty; in all things grace." Or In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in everything, love. Different opinions do not necessary produce division; they can be a source of learning in our relationships with others. When believers differ over trivia or matters of opinion, they should not look down on or condemn each other. The Greek for look *down on* means "despise" (see NRSV) or "reject with contempt." The one with the stronger faith faces the temptation to despise the weaker brother or sister. Paul commanded that our basic approach should be to *accept, listen to, and respect* others.

God has accepted the stronger as well as the weaker ones. Both have acted according to their consciences, but they do not need to make their honest scruples into the rules for the church. Paul responds to both in love and we believers are called to do the same as Paul does. Every believer will be judged by God alone (14:10); therefore, believers have no right to judge one another. Each believer is God's servant and is accountable to Christ alone. And before God, he or she stands or falls. Well says by Martin Luther, "A Christian is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all."

The believers, by their background, had differing opinions about the sacredness of certain days. But the position of each should be fully convinced in one's own mind, even if it means disagreeing with other believers. Believers may disagree on certain issues but can be acceptable to God. Each believer should be responsible to the Lord, doing as his or her own conscience dictates. The freedom we treasure for ourselves, we must also allow other believers that same freedom. Our lives are for Christ alone; it's the Lord's judgment matters. The believers were delivered from judgment because Christ had died for us and freed us. We will stand before God to give an accounting of our actions for our lives will be judged for what we have done. Both the strong and the weak are free but are not free to put any stumbling block in any brother's way.

Verse 14-23 seems to refer back to the food issue but what Paul tried to emphasize was to honor the conviction of others in terms of promoting the unity of the church. Not only Paul honors the convictions of the others but also limit his own freedom in order to be sensitive to the young converters whose faith may be destroyed by such freedom. Verse 15, Paul admonished his brothers and sisters in Christ that the conduct of stronger believers is not to be decided by what they feel is their better understanding into the Scriptures. Rather, it is to be decided by love and sensitivity. Mature Christians shouldn't flaunt their freedom. They should be sensitive to younger converts whose faith can be destroyed by such freedom. Their freedom should not become a stumbling block to those brothers and sisters whose faith is still weak. To maintain peace relationship is more important than exercising freedom at will. Paul also, in verse 16, wanted brothers and sisters to be honest to their feeling toward other believers. Whether abstaining from meat or enjoying meat, both parties were free to speak their mind. But they were not to

insist theirs was the only possible exercise of freedom. In disputable matters, believers are free to partake or abstain. The believers are accountable to the benefits their brothers in Christ. This is what the gospel all about: the kingdom of God has arrived through the Son of God Jesus Christ. Arguing over matters of eating and drinking does not contribute to righteous (a right relationship with God), peace (unity with fellow Christians), or joy (spiritual contentment) in the churches. The believers need to have a good relationship with God so peace with fellow Christians can also be achieved and as a result, joy in spiritual contentment follows.

Paul reminded us in verse 19 that Christian fellowship should characterized by peace and building up each other. But while Paul urges us to be sensitive to those whose faith may be harmed by our actions, we should not sacrifice our liberty in Christ just to satisfy the selfish motives of those who are trying to force their opinions on us. Each believer is to follow Christ. Thus in verse 20, food and our feelings about it that are not specifically condemned in scripture are not worth arguing about. Personal judging opinions or preference should never be allowed to tear down other believers or divide the church. In verse 21, the bottom line is: do not cause your brothers to fall; it is wrong for one believer to insist on his or her freedom when it causes others' faith to falter. And in those areas of disagreement, Paul counsels the believers to keep their beliefs between themselves and God.

Horizontal Relational (Man-Man, believers) as individual – Paul's obligation to preach Gospel to “Greeks and barbarians,” “wise and foolish”, is evidenced in 1:14-15. He is deeply conscious of his calling, of his being “set apart for the gospel” (1:1), and it is his divine missionary obligation to preach the gospel. Why Paul should feel obligated?

Obligated translates from the Greek "debtor" (*opheiletes*). It may be because after his experience with Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), Paul's goal in life was to spread the Good News of salvation. He was partly obligated to Christ for being his Savior, and he was partly obligated to the entire world because it reminded him of his former lostness. His obligation comes from the realization of his new relationship with Christ.

Lastly, The NT Romans is a letter of "relationship," when compared with other Paul's epistles, can also be evidenced by the following table. See Table 13.

Table 13 Comparison of the Number of People in Each Epistle Written by Paul

Epistle	Rom	1Cor.	2Cor.	Gal	Eph	Phi.	Gal	1The	2The	1Tim	2Tim	Tit	Phi
No.	30+	1+	1+	1+	1+	1+	3+	1+	1+	1+	1+	1	4+

This personal/relational approach is one of the uniqueness in Paul's missional methodology in Romans. Since the day he had a unique personal encounter with the Lord on his way to Damascus, and personally called to be the apostle to the Gentiles. He took himself as the debt of the gospel and dedicated his entire life to fulfill this calling. The gospel of Jesus Christ to Paul is personal.

Theological Approach Summary

The author, in this section, attempted to reach two goals, first, to show that the message presented by Apostle Paul in Romans is based on Gospel, with evangelism emphasis. Second, the book of Romans is highly theological and apologetically, but with the reconciliation of God-man relationship as the final goal. The author attempted to show that there are vertical (God-Man) and horizontal (Man-Man) relational messages in NT Romans, for believers and non-believers.

As we all knew that Paul was a friend maker as well as a soul winner. He is an ambassador for Christ. His friend making skills not only helps the spreading of gospel, but also continuously transformed life in the process. Building relationship for spreading the gospel is supreme importance then as well as in the postmodern era now.

Literature Review Summary

In the postmodern society, the failing of the Enlightenment ideologies and the gradual fading of the teachings of Confucianism, both provide an unprecedented opportunity for churches, through building relationship, to engage the Confucianism Chinese with the incarnation life of Jesus Christ. The contemporary churches have to carry the burden of proof to show the world how the Scripture is supposedly to be interpreted as the Christian community intended, not in words but in actions. The fruit of the Spirit emerges in our lives from the seeds planted by the practices of being the church; and when the church begins to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, it becomes a witness to a postmodern world. (John 17)

The church leadership is crucial in every aspect of church ministry and is of supreme importance in any period of the church history. A small church can be a light and salt to the community where God has called. With biblical leadership, a small church still has many possible transformative opportunities through its loving relationship with the community by the aid of the Holy Spirit. But above all, the church leadership needs to be a relationship builder within the community, for witnessing the gospel is the natural result of the Christian living. Christians are called to be the messenger and ambassador for Christ.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Study

As a child brought up in a Chinese/Taiwanese culture believing that the teachings of Confucianism is only antidote for this trouble world, but later became a Christian in America and then became a pastor of a small suburban EFC church in Houston Texas, I am interested in exploring how a small immigrant church can effectively communicate the Gospel to the Confucianism Chinese and eventually the church can survive in the new land. Especially, in a time when there is no more new immigrant and at the same time the present church attendance is slowly declining.

The author attempted to answer this question through the studies in three area: thematic approach- dealing with cultural issues; sociological approach- employing a case study to learn from a success church grow model; theoretical approach- dealing the issue of gospel contextualization and forming a workable paradigm emphasized on “relational;” theological approach- through the studies on the scripture, mainly the epistle of Romans, to find the theological base for the “relational paradigm.”

Methodology

The method of this thesis-project begins by reviewing the crucial points and central concepts from four approaches: thematic, sociological, theoretical, and theological. And in the end the missional ecclesiology and contextualization of gospel will be emerged as our end product of this paper. In the end of each approach, a short summary will be drawn.

In thematic approach, Confucianism was assessed in its historical context and philosophical trajectories and was seen through the following angles: the nutshell of

Confucius thoughts, pre Ch'in periods, the Chinese "Consciousness of Society"- *Shi*, and Confucius' morality without religion. The author of this thesis hope that through these different angles, the target people of this thesis- the Confucianism Chinese, can be better understood. In the end, a clear missional strategy aims at this particular audience can be achieved.

In sociological approach, the author used the flagship church of EFC as a reference model for the case-study of EFC Nasa, which is the church that the author is pastoring. The author attempted to show that any small size EFC church like the EFC Nasa can experience similar vibrant dynamics through an active outreach program emphasizing on loving relationships.

In theoretical approach, the goal was to study the Christianity in the East and the West within the contexts of the two very different systems of contemporary USA and the oversea-born Chinese. Thereby, the contextualization of the Gospel will be studied and a hopeful a base line of discussion can be established. It is a complex issue but the author's plan was to first briefly identify the elements of Western influence on Chinese culture in general and Chinese Christianity in particular in order to call for the formulation of Sino-theology for contemporary Chinese, making our Christian faith relevant in the anticipation of a new millennium and to be better received by non-Christian Chinese.

In theological approach, there are several methods of studying the book of NT Romans. The study method- the relational paradigm proposed by Dr. Wan was presented in this section. The relational paradigm defined as the results of the "relational" interactions between Being-beings¹ may provide us a new approach to communicate the Gospel to the Confucianism Chinese. The vertical and horizontal relational interactions of

¹ Wan, "Christianity in the East and the West," article IV , 3

Being-beings embedded in the texts will be studied. Apart from the traditional systematic approach, relational paradigm is based on the biblical texts in evangelical context and emphasized on the God-men relationship. This personal/relational approach is one of the uniqueness in Paul's missional methodology in Romans. Since the day he had a unique personal encounter with the Lord on his way to Damascus, and personally called to be the apostle to the Gentiles. He took himself as the debt of the gospel and dedicated his entire life to fulfill this calling. The gospel of Jesus Christ to Paul is personal and divine.

Summary

The present section has described the process how I approach this topic. I have explained that, based on the purpose of the present study and theoretical frame work, a comparative case study design (EFC LA vs. EFC Nasa) was to find out what the transformative potential a small church like EFC Nasa holds in the North America.

4 CONCLUSION

As a child brought up in a Chinese/Taiwanese culture but later became a new-born Christian in America and then became a pastor of a small suburban EFC church in Houston Texas, I am interested in exploring how a small immigrant church can survive in the new land. Especially, in a time when there is no more new immigrant and at the same time the present church attendance is slowly declining.

From an immigrant's perspective, the success and the growth of EFC in North America is quite a spectacular wonder for me. But after 40 years since its first church founded, what is the future direction for the EFC in next ten years. I can't help to imagine, by the time, I will be in my early sixties and not very far from retiring. Is there anything that I can contribute to the EFC that has been given me so much during my seminary time. I graduated from Logos Evangelical Seminary and I have been one of the few EFCGA scholarship recipients during my entire three-year of seminary training. EFCGA even help funded my tuition expense at Fuller theological Seminary! And I had received many encouragement and love from the EFC family. In my heart, I feel obligated to pay back as much as I can. That was part of my motive to write this thesis. But the larger part of my motive came from realizing that the success and constant grow of EFC is vital not just to the Chinese immigrant Christians or the Taiwanese immigrant Christians in the North America, but also to the great part of Chinese communities all over the world. the know not because my church founded my tuition and all the expense, but because EFC church leadership is crucial in outreaching to the Confucianism Chinese in North America. EFC churches need more disciples who are equipped and trained with relationship building to

the community, with the cross-cultural and inter-cultural, one-on-one communication of gospel to the Confucianism Chinese.

Outlook- the U. S. has been attracted the best talents from Asia seeking immigration to the U. S. for better career and opportunities. According to the author of the book "The world is flatten" indicates that many countries like India, China, and East Block have become the center of the talents drain. In the mid 80's, China opened her door to welcome and attracted the western industrial countries capitals to invest in China, and since then Taiwan has actively invested a great amount of resources in China, including talent human resource. Therefore, the incentives of seeking immigration to the U. S. in the old day seemed long gone. And if the continuation of the immigration from Taiwan is fading, many small EFC churches which were established in the 80's have reached its plateau, seen decline, and may actually shrink in size or face closure. And the exodus of the younger generation from their Asian parents' churches is a continuous phenomenon till the last high schoolers leaving home going to college. This phenomenon, though not immune to the larger and to the mainline churches, it can double intensify in magnitude in a smaller EFC church.

Is there any advantage for the EFC movement to move in global context and perspective?

What are the challenges EFC facing?

Summary and Future Studies- Radical Theology is Smith's Proposals to contemporary postmodern Church. He pointed us to elements of a more incarnational, radically orthodox understanding of the church and practice. Smith proposed a model of postmodern church- the centrality of the Word, the use of the lectionary, the engagement

with the arts, practices as ritual discipline.¹ But as how much can the principles be applied to the immigrant church is in question, since the context of the EFC church in the North America is very different from the one Smith had envisioned. How can we preserve the core value of the Christianity which has become an even greater challenging today for the EFC? Since the EFC is itself a product of the gospel contextualization. But the good news is that even our world is globalized, fragmented, pluralistic, and urbanized. So was the Roman Empire in Jesus' day, when multi-ethnic, globalized cities dominated the world. By God's provision, the gospel spread along trade routes connecting Jews and Gentiles alike in these cities. The World is flat! We have more opportunities to preach the Gospel than any other time in the history.

We are not called to take the preference of doing the "radical" that rides a motorcycle, writes edgy books, does podcasts, speaks at conferences, and never really sacrifices much at all. But become a true hero that spreading the Gospel and at the same time, exempt from the pollution in doing it. The two greatest challenges EFC facing, however, one is the hidden, graceless, self-cultivated, self-sufficient, individualized moral standard heavily emphasized in the Confucianism, and the other is the intimacy with God relationship has been replaced with the dedicated service for church.

Nor are we called to eulogize this sort of social service religion, which does not stand at the heart of the New Testament message. The gospel isn't primarily about helping individuals to live the life they've always wanted; it tells people to die to their yearning for self-fulfillment. It is not about helping people feel good about themselves, but telling them that they are dying. It's not about improving people, but killing the old self and creating them anew. It's not about helping people make space for spirituality in

¹ Wan, "Christianity in the East and the West," article IV., 144.

their busy lives, but about a God who would obliterate all our private space. The gospel is not about getting people to cooperate with God in making the world a better place—to give it a fresh coat of paint, to remodel it; instead it announces God's plan to raze the present world order and build something utterly new.²

In short, religion is about making adjustments, making the best of things, inviting God to play a part in our lives and community, and the pursuit of spirituality! The gospel says our lives and our world are catastrophes, beyond tinkering, beyond remodeling. The gospel is about the Cross, which puts a nail in the coffin of religion as such. And the gospel is about resurrection—not an improvement nor an adjustment, but the breaking in of a completely new life because the old life has been obliterated.

The gospel's harsh judgment should make us quiver in fear; and its unrealistic demands should make us sigh in despair; and its surprising grace should leave us astonished in wonder; and its unexpected hope should cause us to collapse in joyful laughter. It should leave fans of religion and sociologists of religion dumbfounded. It should make common people either run from Christianity in fear and trembling, or fall at Jesus' feet and clutch his ankles, saying, "My Lord and My God!"³

English ministry has been a weak link in the EFC churches. How to stop the further exodus is not our concerned in this study, but an immediate attention needs to be flagged. Perhaps we can learn from the Korean churches' experience. There are many questions deemed our attention: In what way our individual EFC churches share experiences with other EFC churches and with other Asian churches? What measures had

² Mark Galli, *Christianity Today*, August 29, (Web-Only) 2009, Vol. 53. Mark Galli | Access 6/30/2009 10:07AM.

³ Galli, *Christianity Today*, August 29, (Web-Only) 2009, Vol. 53.

EFCGA taken to prevent the exodus trend? Why is EFC English ministry necessary? Why not just join the existing mainline church or successful mega-churches? What are the justifications for the EFC churches' existence? Why not join mainline churches? Is there any advantage for the EFC movement to move in global context and perspective? What are the challenges EFC facing?

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